HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 1745 (PCB NR 04-01) Water Management District Planning and Reporting
SPONSOR(S): Committee on Natural Resources
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 2832

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) Natural Resources	18 Y, 0 N	Camechis	Lotspeich
2) Agriculture & Environment Apps. (Sub)	11 Y, 0 N	Dixon	Dixon
3) Appropriations			
4)			
5)			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Currently, various statutes require the South Florida Water Management District (District), as well as other water management districts, to complete numerous annual reports and planning documents regarding the status of programs and water resources within their respective jurisdictions. This bill requires the District to:

- Initiate a pilot project to coordinate, and where appropriate, consolidate legislatively-mandated plans and reports due in 2004, with the exception of budgetary reports;
- Submit all statutorily required information by February 15, 2005; and
- Report the outcome of the pilot project to the Governor and Legislature by February 15, 2005.

The Pilot Project does not appear to result in an immediate fiscal impact. However, if the Pilot Project is successful and the Legislature approves consolidation of reporting and planning functions beyond the Pilot Project, the District estimates an annual District savings of $350,000 and an even larger cost savings for the state if other water management districts are allowed to consolidate reporting functions.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. DOES THE BILL:

1. Reduce government?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[x]
2. Lower taxes?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[x]
3. Expand individual freedom?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[x]
4. Increase personal responsibility?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[x]
5. Empower families?	Yes[]	No[]	N/A[x]

For any principle that received a "no" above, please explain:

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

PRESENT SITUATION

In 1972, the Legislature created five water management districts, including the South Florida Water Management District (District). Today, the District spans 16 counties with a total population of more than six million residents in central and southern Florida, and is responsible for operating and maintaining 1,800 miles of canals and levees, 25 major pumping stations, and more than 2000 water control structures. The District provides flood control protection and water supply protection to residents while coordinating efforts to restore and manage ecosystems from the Kissimmee River to the Everglades and Florida Bay.

Various statutes require the District to create approximately 35 annual plans or reports regarding the status of programs and water resources within its jurisdiction, in addition to requiring the District to review and comment upon numerous other plans and reports. The other four water management districts are also subject to similar requirements.

District staff recently conducted a comprehensive review of the District's planning and reporting functions. The review included interviews with District staff, many of whom believe that "reporting [i]s very redundant and inconsistent." [1] As a result of the review, the District concluded that statutory reporting and planning requirements should be examined to determine whether one or fewer reporting documents could be used to replace currently required reports.[2] District staff determined that "[a]n ideal statewide solution would be the creation of one or a few consolidated reports to serve a variety of the mandates." [3]

EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES

The bill requires the District to initiate a pilot project to coordinate, and where appropriate, consolidate legislatively-mandated plans and reports regarding the status of district programs and water resources within the District's jurisdiction. In addition, the bill includes legislative findings that consolidation of reports will allow stakeholders, the Legislature, and the Governor to be better informed and that increased access to information reported by the District will enhance accountability and ultimately improve protection of Florida's water resources. The bill does not, however, alter the statutory requirements with respect to budgetary reporting.

Specifically, the bill requires the District to:

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[1] *SFWMD Planning Evaluation Project Report, Oct. 6, 2003,* p.3
[2] *Id.* at p.4
[3] *Id.* at p.3

- Submit to the Governor and Legislature by February 15, 2005, the information in such plans and reports due after the effective date of the bill through February 1, 2005, and waives all other statutory deadlines during that time-period;
- Submit information in a thorough and effective format;
- Report to the Governor and Legislature by February 15, 2005, on the outcome of its efforts to coordinate and consolidate statutorily mandated plans and reports, including recommendations for statutory revisions necessary to improve coordination and consolidation if plans and reports; and
- Incorporate suggestions by other water management districts and the Department of Environmental Protection regarding the District's recommendations for statutory revisions.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Provides legislative findings.
Section 2. Requires SFWMD to initiate a pilot project to coordinate and consolidate mandated plans and reports.
Section 3. Requires SFWMD to report the outcome of the pilot project to the Governor and Legislature.
Section 4. Provides an effective date.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues: None.

2. Expenditures:

The pilot project does not appear to result in an immediate cost-savings and may require the District to shift staff temporarily to assist in development of the consolidated report. However, the District provided the following estimates regarding the potential annual cost-savings to the District resulting from consolidating mandated reporting and planning functions:

Annual reductions in the cost of developing, reviewing, editing, and producing one document as opposed to several separate plans and reports	$300,000
Annual reductions in actual document publication and distribution costs	$50,000
Estimated Total Annual reductions in expenditures	$350,000

According to the District, if the Legislature ultimately chooses to consolidate reporting requirements for the other four water management districts, the annual savings may approach $1,000,000.

FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues: None.

2. Expenditures: None.

B. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR: None.

C. FISCAL COMMENTS: None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable because this bill does not appear to: require the counties or cities to spend funds or take an action requiring the expenditure of funds; reduce the authority that cities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with cities or counties.

2. Other: None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY: This bill does not appear to impact the rulemaking authority of any state agency.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS: None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

None.