

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. DOES THE BILL:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Reduce government? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Lower taxes? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Expand individual freedom? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Increase personal responsibility? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Empower families? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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

The bill creates a local government committee that conducts reviews and makes recommendations to the county commission relating to privately-owned water utilities.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

According to Public Service Commission (PSC) docket information, the black water and other water-related issues of Pasco County have long been the subject of numerous PSC proceedings. In August of 2000, the Interagency Copper Pipe Corrosion Project (Project) was initiated by the PSC in response to complaints of black water occurring in some customers' homes, not just in Pasco County, but in other areas as well. The general problem that these customers were experiencing was the result of copper corrosion. The black water problem, discussed in the *Interagency Copper Pipe Corrosion Project Final Report*, stated that black water primarily occurs when hydrogen sulfide in the source water reacts with copper pipes to create copper sulfide, a form of copper corrosion. This corrosion can result in gray to black water in the customers' homes, pin-hole pipe leaks, and eventually failure of the copper pipe. In many instances, failure of copper pipe due to corrosion will result without evidence of discolored water. Further, the quality of the drinking water as it enters the customers' homes often meets all state and federal drinking water standards for health effects. Consequently, black water is viewed as an aesthetic rather than a health problem. In Florida, occurrences of hydrogen sulfide are predominantly found in coastal areas and areas bordering the I-4 corridor. However, in regard to Pasco County, black water is not the only issue this bill addresses as problematic for the monopoly water utility consumers. Two other drinking water problems identified by these customers are a rotten-egg smell resulting from variations in raw water chemistry and customer service.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill establishes a pilot project in Pasco County that allows Pasco County the ability to respond to consumer complaints regarding “black water” and rotten-egg odors in drinking water arising from local variations in raw water chemistry, and to complaints regarding customer service. The bill provides for an ad hoc committee to be created by the chair of the Pasco County Commission whenever a significant number of complaints, about any monopoly water utility, are received by Pasco County for these water-related issues.

This two-year committee will be made up of the chair of the County Commission, two representatives from the monopoly utility, two customer representatives, the county health officer, and two independent scientific experts in water chemistry. The functions of the committee will be to:

- review and evaluate customer service complaints, and if necessary, recommend to the County Commission the establishment of uniform customer service criteria.

- review and evaluate black water and odor complaints made by monopoly water utility customers and investigate whether similar complaints have been made with the PSC.
- if necessary, recommend to the County Commission for the requirement of new technology or uniform minimum technology standards in treating the two water-related problems and the delivery of customer service. The committee's determination may be based only on the utility's operational protocol at it relates to customer service and water quality, related to local variations in water chemistry. Any standards recommended by the committee may not deal with the utility's financial aspects or conflict with water quality standards presently imposed by the PSC, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, in consultation with the PSC, DEP, and EPA, the committee may still make economical, technological, and environmental recommendations for local technological standards, processing methods, or other customer services responsiveness standards, that exceed those presently imposed.

The bill allows the Pasco County Commission the discretion to either adopt as recommended or adopt additional technological standards that do not conflict with PSC, DEP, or EPA permitting requirements. The County Commission may also adopt other minimum standards for customer service responsiveness. Each monopoly water utility shall be informed of any new standards adopted by the County Commission and given three months to submit to the County a plan for compliance. The County shall allow for a reasonable time for compliance of any new standards. Also, the County Commission is prohibited from adopting standards that deal with the financial aspects of a monopoly water utility. The County Commission is prohibited from adopting standards that are in conflict with, or are more stringent than, water quality standards presently imposed by the PSC, DEP, and EPA.

The provisions of the bill are subject to ch. 120, F.S., and authorize any affected monopoly water utility, consumer, or state agency to challenge the County Commission's adoption of standards that do not comply with the provisions of the act.

All reasonable and prudent costs incurred in complying with the County imposed standards and any legal or other costs incurred by the utility as a result of participating in the process provided for in the bill are recoverable by a monopoly water utility under s. 367.081(4) (b), F.S., if that monopoly water utility is regulated by the PSC.

The act is intended to supersede the provisions of ch. 367, F.S., to the extent that such provisions are inconsistent with this act. This act shall expire July 1, 2005, and it takes effect upon becoming law.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Addresses monopoly water utilities in Pasco County; provides for legislative findings, a pilot project, and county-wide standards for black water, rotten-egg odor and customer service;

Section 2. Provides that the act takes effect upon becoming law.

II. NOTICE/REFERENDUM AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. NOTICE PUBLISHED? Yes No

IF YES, WHEN?

January 9, 2004

WHERE?

Gulf Coast Business Review, a weekly newspaper, published at New Port Richey in Pasco County.

B. REFERENDUM(S) REQUIRED? Yes No

IF YES, WHEN?

C. LOCAL BILL CERTIFICATION FILED? Yes, attached No

D. ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT FILED? Yes, attached No

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENT/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES