

HB 1241

2006

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Caloosahatchee-St. Lucie Rivers
3 Corridor Advisory Council; creating the advisory council;
4 providing a definition; providing for appointment of
5 members, per diem and travel expenses, staff, and duties
6 of the advisory council; exempting staff from pt. II of
7 ch. 110, F.S., relating to the Career Service System;
8 requiring recommendations to the Legislature; requiring a
9 report to the Legislature and Governor by a specific date;
10 providing for expiration of the advisory council;
11 providing an effective date.

12
13 WHEREAS, the hydrologic basins of the Caloosahatchee River
14 and its estuary and the St. Lucie River and its estuary,
15 including Lake Okeechobee, constitute a single, hydrologically
16 related system, and

17 WHEREAS, during climatic periods of high rainfall and
18 tropical storms occurring within this system, the high rates of
19 surface water discharge from Lake Okeechobee have significant
20 adverse impacts on the receiving waters of the Caloosahatchee
21 River and the St. Lucie River ecosystems and their estuaries,
22 and

23 WHEREAS, high concentrations of nutrients and other
24 pollutant-laden discharges that significantly degrade receiving
25 waters have a demonstrable economic effect on the region's very
26 substantial tourist and outdoor recreational economies, as well
27 as the quality of life of the residents of Lee and Martin
28 Counties, and

29 WHEREAS, while the Lake Okeechobee Protection Program
 30 provides significant safeguards and strategies for protecting
 31 and improving water quality discharges into Lake Okeechobee,
 32 there is no comprehensive plan for the Caloosahatchee-St. Lucie
 33 Rivers Corridor, NOW, THEREFORE,

34

35 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

36

37 Section 1. Caloosahatchee-St. Lucie Rivers Corridor
 38 Advisory Council; membership; meetings; staff.--

39 (1) For purposes of this act, the hydrologic basins of the
 40 Caloosahatchee River and its estuary and the St. Lucie River and
 41 its estuary, including Lake Okeechobee, shall be known as the
 42 "Caloosahatchee-St. Lucie Rivers Corridor."

43 (2) There is created the Caloosahatchee-St. Lucie Rivers
 44 Corridor Advisory Council under the Department of Environmental
 45 Protection consisting of 17 members who shall be appointed as
 46 follows:

47 (a) The Governor shall appoint:

48 1. One consumer member.

49 2. One member with hydrologic experience within the
 50 Caloosahatchee-St. Lucie Rivers Corridor and expertise in
 51 engineering.

52 3. One member from the agriculture industry.

53 4. One member from an environmental group.

54 5. One member from the business or tourism community in
 55 Okeechobee County, Martin County, or Palm Beach County.

56 (b) The President of the Senate shall appoint:

57 | 1. One member representing local government in Lee County.

58 | 2. One member with hydrologic experience within the
 59 | Caloosahatchee-St. Lucie Rivers Corridor and expertise in
 60 | hydrology.

61 | 3. One member from the agriculture industry.

62 | 4. One member from an environmental group.

63 | 5. One member from the business or tourism community in
 64 | Lee County or Charlotte County.

65 | 6. One member from the Senate.

66 | (c) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall
 67 | appoint:

68 | 1. One member representing local government in Martin
 69 | County.

70 | 2. One member with hydrologic experience within the
 71 | Caloosahatchee-St. Lucie Rivers Corridor and expertise in
 72 | biology.

73 | 3. One member from the agriculture industry.

74 | 4. One member from an environmental group.

75 | 5. One member from the business or tourism community in
 76 | Hendry County or Glades County.

77 | 6. One member from the House of Representatives.

78 | (d) The Governor shall appoint the chair of the advisory
 79 | council from among its members.

80 | (e) Appointments to the advisory council shall be made no
 81 | later than 30 days after the effective date of this act.

82 | (f) Each member of the advisory council may receive per
 83 | diem and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061, Florida

HB 1241

2006

84 Statutes, while carrying out the business of the advisory
85 council.

86 (g) The first meeting of the advisory council shall be
87 held no later than 60 days after the effective date of this act.

88 (h) The records and meetings of the advisory council are
89 subject to the provisions of chapter 119 and s. 286.011, Florida
90 Statutes.

91 (i) The advisory council shall be staffed by an executive
92 director and other personnel selected and hired by the
93 Department of Environmental Protection who shall be exempt from
94 part II of chapter 110, Florida Statutes, relating to the Career
95 Service System. The Department of Environmental Protection may
96 employ staff and consultants as necessary to assist the advisory
97 council in fulfilling its responsibilities. The South Florida
98 Water Management District and the Department of Environmental
99 Protection shall each appoint a liaison for the respective
100 agency to work directly with the executive director of the
101 advisory council and to provide expertise and assistance to the
102 advisory council.

103 (3) The duties of the Caloosahatchee–St. Lucie Rivers
104 Corridor Advisory Council are to:

105 (a) Meet at least five times after August 1, 2006.

106 (b) Hold a minimum of five public hearings within the
107 Caloosahatchee–St. Lucie Rivers Corridor for the purpose of
108 receiving public comments and information.

109 (c) Review the operation and management of Lake Okeechobee
110 and the associated discharges from the lake for the purpose of

HB 1241

2006

111 formulating specific recommendations relating to, but not
112 limited to:

113 1. Scientifically viable, economically feasible projects,
114 programs, and regulations that address or mitigate the impacts
115 of high level discharges from Lake Okeechobee upon the receiving
116 waters of the Caloosahatchee River and the St. Lucie Canal and
117 St. Lucie River and their respective estuaries.

118 2. Ongoing projects and plans authorized pursuant to the
119 Lake Okeechobee Protection Program and the Comprehensive
120 Everglades Restoration Plan under s. 373.4592, Florida Statutes.

121 3. Environmentally and economically feasible projects to
122 remove accumulated sedimentation from Lake Okeechobee.

123 4. Alternative treatment strategies, projects, best
124 management practices, and funding sources to manage more
125 effectively the hydrology of the corridor to minimize adverse
126 ecological effects upon the receiving waters from Lake
127 Okeechobee discharge.

128 5. Long-term funding for implementation of the projects
129 and programs identified in the report.

130 (4) The advisory council shall prepare and submit a report
131 and recommendations to the President of the Senate and the
132 Speaker of the House of Representatives prior to the 2007
133 Regular Session of the Legislature for implementation of
134 projects and strategies to mitigate the present effects of high
135 discharges from Lake Okeechobee upon the described basins.

136 (5) The advisory council shall submit to the Governor, the
137 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
138 Representatives by March 1, 2007, a report with specific

HB 1241

2006

139 recommendations for implementation by the Legislature and the
140 Governor that will mitigate ecological effects upon the
141 Caloosahatchee–St. Lucie Rivers Corridor and stabilize the
142 effect of high discharges from Lake Okeechobee upon the tourist
143 economy of Southwest and Southeast Florida.

144 (6) The advisory council shall expire on April 1, 2007.

145 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.