

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Environmental Preservation Committee

BILL: SB 496

INTRODUCER: Senator Argenziano

SUBJECT: Citrus/Hernando Waterways Council

DATE: January 4, 2006

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Branning</u>	<u>Kiger</u>	<u>EP</u>	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	<u>CA</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

This bill increases the membership of the Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council and revises the duties of the council.

The task forces that include governmental representatives are expanded to include a representative from the public works department of both Citrus and Hernando Counties.

This bill substantially amends section 1 of chapter 2003-287, Laws of Florida.

II. Present Situation:

In 2003, the Legislature created the Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council within the Withlacoochee and Coastal River Basin Boards of the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The council is coordinated by representatives of the following agencies: The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

The council consists of 12 voting members with 6 members appointed by the President of the Senate and 6 members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Representatives on the council include:

- A waterfront property owner from each county;
- An attorney from each county;
- A member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce from each county;
- An environmental engineer from each county;

- An engineer from each county; and
- A person from each county with training in biology or another scientific discipline.

The council members from each county were required to form two separate county task forces from the council to review and make recommendations on specific waterways. The Hernando County Task Force shall develop plans for the restoration of the Weeki Wachee River and Springs. The Citrus County Task Force shall develop plans for the restoration of the Tsala-Apopka Chain of Lakes.

In addition, there is a technical advisory group to the council and the two county task forces which consist of one representative each from the Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Transportation, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Coastal Rivers Basin Board, the Withlacoochee River Basin Board, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, each of whom shall be appointed by his or her respective agency and each of whom, with the exception of the representatives from the Withlacoochee River Basin Board and Coastal Rivers Basin Board, shall have had training in biology or another scientific discipline.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District is the lead entity for the purpose of providing staff and administrative support to assist the council in carrying out its duties.

The council powers and duties are to:

- Review audits and all data specifically related to lake and river restoration techniques and sport fish population recovery strategies, including data and strategies for shoreline restoration, sand and other sediment control and removal, exotic species management, floating tussock management or removal, navigation, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat improvement, particularly as they may apply to the Citrus/Hernando waterways.
- Evaluate whether additional studies are needed.
- Explore all possible sources of funding to conduct the restoration activities.
- Report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representative before November 25 of each year on the progress of the Citrus/Hernando Waterways restoration program and any recommendations for the next fiscal year.

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, with assistance from the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and in consultation with the Department of Environmental Protection, shall develop tasks to be undertaken for the enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill would add two additional members to the Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council. Currently, there must be a waterfront property owner from each county. This bill would require two waterfront property owners from each county, one of whom must be a property

owner from the east side of the county and one of whom must be property owner from the west side of the county.

The bill also broadens the jurisdiction of the two separate county task forces from the council. Currently, the Hernando County Task Force must develop plans for the restoration of the Weeki Wachee River and Springs. This bill would require this task force to develop plans for the restoration of the waterways in Hernando County. Also, the Citrus County Task Force is currently required to develop plans for the restoration of the Tsala-Apopka Chain of Lakes. This bill provides that this task force is to develop plans for the restoration of waterways in Citrus County.

The task forces consisting of governmental representatives are expanded to include a representative of the public works department of each county.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

To the extent that the council is able to develop an action plan and sources of funding for the restoration of all waterways in Citrus and Hernando Counties, properties around the waterways may benefit in terms of increased market values of their land. Area residents would benefit from restored waterways in terms of better recreational opportunities.

The council will have greater representation from waterfront property owners in Citrus and Hernando Counties.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Each affected county public works department will now be represented on the governmental task forces.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

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