

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to the North River Fire District, Manatee
 3 County; codifying, amending, and reenacting special acts
 4 relating to the district; providing boundaries; providing
 5 for a board of fire commissioners; providing for
 6 elections; providing for filling of vacancies; providing
 7 authority to levy non-ad valorem assessments; providing
 8 for liens; providing for public hearings; providing for
 9 deposit of funds; providing for use of funds; providing
 10 borrowing power of the district; providing authority and
 11 power to acquire certain property; providing duties of the
 12 board of fire commissioners; providing authority to employ
 13 qualified personnel; providing for financial reporting;
 14 providing for existence of the district; providing
 15 definitions; providing for impact fees; providing a
 16 schedule of non-ad valorem assessments; providing
 17 severability; providing for liberal construction;
 18 repealing chapters 89-502, 91-406, and 96-452, Laws of
 19 Florida, relating to the district; providing an effective
 20 date.

21
 22 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

23
 24 Section 1. (1) The reenactment of existing law in this
 25 act shall not be construed as a grant of additional authority to
 26 nor to supersede the authority of any entity pursuant to law.
 27 Exceptions to law contained in any special act that are
 28 reenacted pursuant to this act shall continue to apply.

29 (2) The reenactment of existing law in this act shall not
 30 be construed to modify, amend, or alter any covenants,
 31 contracts, or other obligations of the district with respect to
 32 bonded indebtedness. Nothing pertaining to the reenactment of
 33 existing law in this act shall be construed to affect the
 34 ability of the district to levy and collect taxes, assessments,
 35 fees, or charges for the purpose of redeeming or servicing
 36 bonded indebtedness of the district.

37 Section 2. Chapters 89-502, 91-406, and 96-452, Laws of
 38 Florida, are codified, amended, reenacted, and repealed as
 39 herein provided.

40 Section 3. The North River Fire District is re-created,
 41 and the charter is re-created and reenacted to read:

42 Section 1. Incorporation.--Upon this act becoming a law,
 43 all of the unincorporated lands in Manatee County, as described
 44 in this act, and the City of Palmetto, shall become and be
 45 incorporated into an independent special fire district. Said
 46 special fire district shall become and be a public municipal
 47 corporation, having the powers and duties herein set forth under
 48 the name of North River Fire District.

49 Section 2. Jurisdiction.--The lands to be incorporated
 50 within the North River Fire District are located in Manatee
 51 County and are described as follows:

52
 53 All of Sections 1, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26,
 54 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36, all in Township 33
 55 South, Range 17 East; all of Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,
 56 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19,

57 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32,
 58 33, 34, 35 and 36, all in Township 33 South, Range 18
 59 East; all of Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,
 60 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17, and that part of
 61 Sections 18, 22, 23 and 24 North of North bulkhead
 62 line of the Manatee River, all in Township 34 South,
 63 Range 17 East; all of Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
 64 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 19, and that part of
 65 Section 16 lying North of North bulkhead line of the
 66 Manatee River, all in Township 34 South, Range 18
 67 East. Further including the full right of way of all
 68 abutting roads. Also, all islands and submerged lands
 69 within the limits of the established bulkhead line
 70 abutting the specified Sections, more particularly
 71 described as follows:

72
 73 Begin at the intersection of the established or to be
 74 established bulkhead line along the North bank of the
 75 Manatee River with the West boundary of Section 7,
 76 Township 34 South, Range 17 East; thence Easterly
 77 along the established or to be established bulkhead
 78 line of the Manatee River to the East boundary of
 79 Section 12, Township 34 South, Range 18 East; thence
 80 Northerly along the East boundary of Township 34
 81 South, Range 18 East to the Manatee County
 82 Hillsborough County boundary line; thence Westerly
 83 along the Manatee County Hillsborough County boundary
 84 line to the established or to be established bulkhead

85 line of the East shore of Tampa Bay; thence Southerly
86 and Westerly along the established or to be
87 established bulkhead line of Tampa Bay and Terra Ceia
88 Bay to the established or to be established bulkhead
89 line on the North bank of the Manatee River to the
90 West boundary of Section 7, Township 34 South, Range
91 17 East and the Point of Beginning.

92
93 Section 3. Board of fire commissioners.--The business and
94 affairs of the district shall be conducted and administered by a
95 board of seven commissioners, who shall be elected as provided
96 for in section 4. Upon its election annually in January, the
97 board shall organize by electing from its members a chair, a
98 vice chair, a secretary, and a treasurer. The positions of
99 secretary and treasurer may be held by one member. The
100 commissioners may each be paid a salary or honorarium, to be
101 determined by the board, that shall not exceed \$500 per month
102 and may not be otherwise employed by the district on either a
103 full-time or part-time basis and receive compensation for such
104 employment, except as specifically provided for herein. Each
105 commissioner shall, before he or she enters upon his or her
106 duties as commissioner, execute to the state, for the benefit of
107 the district, a good and sufficient bond approved by a Circuit
108 Judge of Manatee County in the sum of not less than \$5,000 with
109 a qualified corporate surety, conditioned to faithfully perform
110 the duties of the office of commissioner. All premiums for such
111 surety on all such bonds shall be paid from the funds of said
112 district. The board of fire commissioners shall have the

113 authority and power to make and enter into contracts with firms,
114 individuals, and municipal corporations relating to any and all
115 of the purposes of the district.

116 Section 4. Election of commissioners.--

117 (1) The board of fire commissioners of the district shall
118 consist of seven members who shall serve for 4-year terms and
119 shall be elected in a nonpartisan election as hereinafter set
120 forth. The seven-member board of fire commissioners shall
121 consist of one member elected by the entire fire district to
122 represent each of five fire commissioner districts of the North
123 River Fire District, plus two commissioners elected by the
124 entire fire district to hold seats at large. The boundaries of
125 the fire commissioner districts shall be established by the
126 board and shall be numerically designated as fire commissioner
127 districts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The fire commissioner seats on the
128 board shall be identified as seats 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5,
129 corresponding to the numerical designation of each fire
130 commissioner district, respectively, and the at-large seats
131 shall be identified as seats 6 and 7. In addition to
132 requirements of candidates for election under general law, in
133 order to qualify for such election or for maintaining such a
134 position, a candidate or elected commissioner shall reside
135 within his or her respective district.

136 (2) Four members of the board of fire commissioners
137 (district seats 2, 4, and 5 and at-large seat 6) shall be
138 elected at the general election during each United States
139 presidential election year. The remaining three members of the
140 board (district seats 1 and 3 and at-large seat 7) shall be

141 elected at the general election during each Florida
 142 gubernatorial election year.

143 (3) Each elected commissioner shall hold office until his
 144 or her successor is elected and qualified, or until such
 145 commissioner ceases to qualify as a commissioner or is removed
 146 from office.

147 (4) Each elected member shall assume office 10 days after
 148 the member's election.

149 (5) If a vacancy occurs on the board, the remaining
 150 members may appoint a qualified person to fill the seat until
 151 the next general election that is held at least 3 months after
 152 the date the vacancy occurs, at which time an election shall be
 153 held to fill the vacancy.

154 Section 5. Authority to levy non-ad valorem assessments.--

155 (1) The district shall have the right, power, and
 156 authority to levy non-ad valorem assessments against the taxable
 157 real estate lying within its territorial bounds, as well as to
 158 assess an additional charge for hazardous or emergency
 159 conditions, in order to provide funds for the purpose of the
 160 district. The rate of such assessments shall be fixed by a
 161 resolution of the board of fire commissioners but shall in no
 162 event exceed the amounts set forth in section 15.

163 (2) The board of fire commissioners is authorized to
 164 provide a reasonable schedule of charges for emergency services,
 165 including, but not limited to, firefighting occurring in or to
 166 motor vehicles, marine vessels including live-aboards, aircraft,
 167 or rail cars including engines or as a result of the operation
 168 of such motor vehicles, marine vessels including live-aboards,

169 aircraft, or rail cars including engines to which the North
170 River Fire District is called to render such emergency service,
171 and to charge a fee for the services rendered in accordance with
172 said schedule. The North River Fire District shall have a lien
173 upon said motor vehicles, marine vessels including live-aboards,
174 aircraft, or rail cars including engines for the charges so
175 assessed. The board of fire commissioners is authorized to enter
176 into contracts for firefighting duties that provide a reasonable
177 remuneration to the district for such firefighting activities.

178 (3) The board of fire commissioners is authorized to
179 provide a reasonable schedule of charges for the fighting of
180 fires occurring in or at refuse dumps or as a result of an
181 illegal burn, which fire, dump, or burn is not authorized by
182 general or special law of the state, rule, regulation, order, or
183 ordinance, to which the district is called to fight or
184 extinguish. The fee charged in accordance with said schedule
185 shall constitute a lien upon the real property where said fire
186 or burn is located.

187 (4) The district shall provide to the county property
188 appraiser a notice of fire assessment rates as adopted by
189 resolution not later than June 1 of each year. The county
190 property appraiser shall then furnish to the commissioners of
191 the district a tax roll covering all taxable properties with the
192 assessment rate levy placed on each parcel of property by July
193 1, which tax roll is consistent with and set forth by section
194 193.1142, Florida Statutes. Not later than 21 days after receipt
195 of the tax roll from the county property appraiser, the district
196 shall return the tax roll, having first checked and noted any

197 corrections or adjustments to the fire assessment levy against
198 each parcel of property.

199 (5) Prior to adopting a rate of assessment as required in
200 subsection (4), the board of fire commissioners shall properly
201 advertise and hold a public hearing with respect to the proposed
202 rate of assessment. At such hearing, any property owner in the
203 district shall have the right to file a written objection and
204 testify at such hearing regarding the proposed rate of
205 assessment. After due consideration of all comments or protests,
206 the board of fire commissioners shall adopt a resolution
207 specifying the rate of assessment on all taxable property.

208 (6) The board of fire commissioners shall, not earlier
209 than 30 days nor later than 45 days after the mailing of the
210 notice of proposed property taxes as required by section
211 194.011(1), Florida Statutes, hold a properly advertised public
212 hearing to hear appeals from any property owner in the district
213 with respect to the method of calculation or the amounts of fire
214 assessment levied against a parcel of land. Within 20 calendar
215 days after the conclusion of the public hearing to hear appeals,
216 the board of fire commissioners shall notify all concerned
217 parties and the county property appraiser in writing of its
218 decision. The decision shall include reasons for granting or
219 denying the appeal.

220 (7) The county property appraiser shall then include the
221 assessments thus made by the board of fire commissioners of the
222 district in the Manatee County tax roll and the same shall be
223 collected in the manner and form as is provided for the

224 collection of county taxes and paid over by the county tax
225 collector to the board of fire commissioners.

226 (8) Such non-ad valorem assessments shall be a lien upon
227 the land so assessed along with the county taxes assessed
228 against the same until said assessments have been paid and, if
229 the same become delinquent, shall be considered a part of the
230 county tax subject to the same penalties, fees, and remedies for
231 enforcement and collections and shall be enforced and collected
232 as provided by the laws of the state for the collection of such
233 taxes.

234 Section 6. Deposit of funds.--All proceeds of assessments
235 and other funds of the district shall be deposited in the name
236 of the district in a financial institution designated under the
237 provisions of chapter 280, Florida Statutes, as a qualified
238 public depository. The approved financial institution shall be
239 designated by a resolution of the board of fire commissioners.
240 No funds of the district shall be paid out or disbursed except
241 by check.

242 Section 7. Use of funds.--Funds of the district shall not
243 be used for any purpose other than for the administration of the
244 affairs and business of the district; the acquisition,
245 construction, care, maintenance, upkeep, and operation of sites
246 for fire stations; fire station and firefighting and rescue
247 equipment; the employment of qualified personnel as provided for
248 herein and payment of the essential personnel benefits such as
249 health, life, disability, and workers' compensation insurance;
250 retirement programs and other associated costs designed to
251 further the purpose of the district; and legal expenses incurred

252 for the operation, enforcement, and furtherance of the
253 district's affairs and business.

254 Section 8. Borrowing power.--The board of fire
255 commissioners shall have the power and authority to borrow money
256 for the purpose of the district and to mortgage the real and
257 personal property of the district or to pledge future
258 assessments and liens as security for such loans. The limits of
259 such authority shall be that the amount borrowed shall not
260 exceed three times the total assessments in the fiscal year the
261 loan is contracted; however, the district commissioners shall
262 not create any indebtedness or incur obligations for any amount
263 that it is unable to pay out of the district's funds. Neither
264 the district commissioners as a body nor any one of them as an
265 individual shall be personally or individually liable for the
266 repayment of such loan or loans. In addition, the board of fire
267 commissioners shall have the power and authority to make
268 purchases of equipment on an installment basis as necessary, if
269 funds are available for the payment of the current year's
270 installment on such equipment plus the amount due in that year
271 on any other installment or other indebtedness.

272 Section 9. Authority and power to acquire.--The North
273 River Fire District shall have all of the corporate powers of a
274 Florida municipal corporation as provided by general law,
275 including, but not limited to, the right to sue and to be sued;
276 to lease, own, possess, and convey real and personal property
277 necessary to carry out the purpose of this act; and to acquire
278 such property by grant, gift, purchase, devise, or eminent
279 domain or any means whatsoever.

280 Section 10. Duties of officers and authority of
 281 commissioners.--The officers of the board of fire commissioners
 282 shall have the duties usually pertaining to, vested in, and
 283 incumbent upon like officers. A record shall be kept of all
 284 meetings of said board of fire commissioners, and, in such
 285 meetings, concurrence of a majority of said commissioners at the
 286 meeting consisting of a quorum shall be necessary for any
 287 affirmative actions by said board. The board of fire
 288 commissioners of said district shall have the authority to adopt
 289 ordinances and rules and regulations for fire safety and
 290 protection, including, but not limited to, those standards set
 291 out in section 633.025, Florida Statutes.

292 Section 11. Authority to employ qualified personnel.--The
 293 board of fire commissioners shall have the authority to employ
 294 personnel as required to carry out the purpose of the district.
 295 Such personnel may, in addition to others, include a fire chief,
 296 who shall reside in the district, one or more firefighters or
 297 inspectors, and administrative or maintenance personnel as the
 298 board of fire commissioners deems necessary to carry out the
 299 purpose of the district and shall have authority to provide all
 300 things necessary for the prevention, extinguishment, and control
 301 of fires in the district.

302 Section 12. Financial reporting.--The board of fire
 303 commissioners shall comply with all appropriate reporting
 304 requirements for units of local government, including, but not
 305 limited to, sections 11.45, 189.416, 189.417, 189.418, 218.32,
 306 and 218.38, Florida Statutes. These requirements as referenced
 307 herein include the filing on or before September 1 of each year

308 of the district's estimated budget for the fiscal year beginning
 309 October 1, the filing of financial statements and audits for the
 310 fiscal year ending each September 30 within the timeframes
 311 identified, and other reporting requirements specified.

312 Section 13. Existence.--The North River Fire District
 313 shall exist until dissolved by law.

314 Section 14. Definitions.--The term "district" means the
 315 North River Fire District, and the terms "board" and "board of
 316 fire commissioners" mean the Board of Fire Commissioners of the
 317 North River Fire District, unless otherwise specified.

318 Section 15. Schedule of non-ad valorem assessments.--The
 319 assessment procedures and amounts, as set forth herein,
 320 represent the manner to be followed and the maximum allowable
 321 rates that shall be charged by the district, if needed. For
 322 assessment purposes, all property within the district shall be
 323 divided into three general classifications: vacant parcels,
 324 residential parcels, and commercial/industrial parcels.

325 (1) Vacant parcels shall include all parcels that are
 326 essentially undeveloped and are usually classified by the
 327 property appraiser as Use Code types "0000," "0004," "1000,"
 328 "4000," "9800," "9900," and "5000" through "7000." The maximum
 329 annual assessment for these parcels shall be:

330 (a) Vacant residential lots (Use Code 0000): \$8.90 per
 331 lot.

332 (b) Vacant condominium lots (Use Code 0004): \$8.90 per
 333 lot.

334 (c) Unsubdivided acreage (Use Codes 5000 through 7000,
 335 9800, 9900, and 9901): \$4.85 per acre or fraction thereof,

336 except that not more than \$890 shall be assessed against any one
337 parcel.

338 (d) Vacant commercial and industrial parcels (Use Codes
339 1000 and 4000): assessed as a platted lot or unsubdivided
340 acreage as applicable. Whenever a residential unit is located on
341 a parcel classified as vacant, the residential plot shall be
342 considered as one lot or one acre with the balance of the parcel
343 being assessed as vacant land in accordance with the schedule of
344 commercial/industrial assessments. Whenever an agricultural or
345 commercial building or structure is located on a parcel
346 classified as vacant, the building or structure shall be
347 assessed in accordance with the schedule of
348 commercial/industrial assessments.

349 (2) Residential parcels shall include all parcels that are
350 developed for residential purposes and are usually classified by
351 the property appraiser as Use Code types "0100," "0104," "0200,"
352 "0204," "0300," "0400," "0500," "0600," "0700," "0800," "0801,"
353 "0803," "1200," "2800," and "2802." Surcharges may be assigned
354 by the district for dwelling units located on the second, third,
355 fourth, fifth, or higher floors. The maximum annual assessment
356 for these parcels shall be:

357 (a) Use Codes "0100" and "0104" shall be \$98.00 per
358 single-family residence. If said residence is located on a
359 parcel of land not in excess of one lot or one acre, no
360 additional assessment shall be made for the land on which said
361 residence is located. If the land upon which said residence is
362 located exceeds one lot or one acre, an additional assessment
363 may be made in accordance with subsection (1).

364 (b) Use Codes "0300," "0800," "0801," and "0803,"
 365 multifamily residences, shall be \$98 per unit. If said residence
 366 is located on a parcel of land not in excess of one lot or one
 367 acre, no additional assessment shall be made for the land on
 368 which said residence is located. If the land upon which said
 369 residence is located exceeds one lot or one acre, an additional
 370 assessment may be made in accordance with subsection (1).

371 (c) Use Code "0400," condominium/apartments and
 372 residential, shall be \$98 per dwelling unit for any condominium
 373 or apartment units located on the first and second floors; \$147
 374 per unit for any condominium or apartment units located on the
 375 third floor; \$196 per unit for any condominium or apartment
 376 units located on the fourth floor; \$245 per unit for any
 377 condominium or apartment units located on the fifth floor; and
 378 \$294 per unit for any condominium or apartment units located on
 379 a floor above the fifth floor.

380 (d) Use Codes "0200," "0204," and "2802," mobile homes,
 381 mobile homes/condominiums and mobile home parks, residential,
 382 shall be \$98 per dwelling unit.

383 (e) Use Codes "0500," "0600," and "0700," cooperatives,
 384 retirement homes, miscellaneous, migrant camps, etc., shall be
 385 assessed \$98 per dwelling unit.

386 (f) Any other residential units, including, but not
 387 limited to, the residential portion of mixed uses (Use Code
 388 1200), shall be assessed \$98 per dwelling unit.

389 (g) Travel trailer parks (Use Code 2800) shall be assessed
 390 \$49 per dwelling unit or available rental space, as applicable.

391 (3) Commercial/industrial parcels shall include all other
 392 developed parcels that are not included in the residential
 393 category in subsection (2). All commercial/industrial parcels
 394 shall be assessed on a square footage basis for all buildings
 395 and structures in accordance with the following schedule and
 396 hazard classification. The district may or may not vary the
 397 assessment by hazard classifications as set forth herein, based
 398 on guidelines to be approved by the board of fire commissioners.
 399 The base assessment for all buildings and structures shall be
 400 \$178 for the first 1,000 square feet on a parcel. The schedule
 401 for all square footage above 1,000 square feet is as follows;
 402 however, the district may grant an improved hazard rating to all
 403 or part of the building or structures if they are equipped with
 404 complete internal fire suppression facilities:

Category	<u>Use Codes</u>	<u>Square Foot Assessment</u>
Mercantile (M)	<u>1100, 1200, 1300,</u> <u>1400, 1500, 1600</u> <u>1604, 2900</u>	<u>\$0.09 per square foot</u>
Business (B)	<u>1700, 1704, 1800,</u> <u>1900, 1904, 2200,</u> <u>2300, 2400, 2500,</u> <u>2600, 3000, 3600</u>	<u>\$0.09 per square foot</u>
Assembly (A)	<u>2100, 3100, 3200,</u>	

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

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	<u>3300, 3400, 3500,</u>	
	<u>3700, 3800, 3900,</u>	
	<u>7600, 7700, 7900</u>	<u>\$0.10 per square foot</u>
409		
	<u>Factory/</u>	<u>4100, 4104, 4400,</u>
	<u>Industrial (F)</u>	<u>4500, 4600, 4700,</u>
	<u>9100</u>	<u>\$0.10 per square foot</u>
410		
	<u>Storage (S)</u>	<u>2000, 2700, 2800,</u>
	<u>4900</u>	<u>\$0.09 per square foot</u>
411		
	<u>Hazardous (H)</u>	<u>4200, 4300, 4800,</u>
	<u>4804</u>	<u>\$0.20 per square foot</u>
412		
	<u>Institutional (I)</u>	<u>7000, 7100, 7200,</u>
		<u>7300, 7400, 7800,</u>
		<u>8400, 8500, 9200</u>
413		<u>\$0.09 per square foot</u>

414 Whenever a parcel is utilized for multiple hazard
 415 classifications, the district may vary the assessment in
 416 accordance with actual categories.

417 Section 16. Impact fees.--

418 (1) (a) It is hereby found and determined that the district
 419 is located in one of the fastest growing areas of Manatee
 420 County, which is itself experiencing one of the highest growth
 421 rates in the nation. New construction and resulting population
 422 growth have placed a strain upon the capabilities of the
 423 district to continue providing the high level of professional

424 fire protection and emergency services for which the residents
425 of the district pay and that they deserve.

426 (b) It is hereby declared that the cost of new facilities
427 for fire protection and emergency services should be borne by
428 new users of the district services to the extent new
429 construction requires new facilities, but only to that extent.
430 It is the legislative intent of this section to transfer to the
431 new user of the district's fire protection and emergency
432 services a fair share of the costs that new users impose on the
433 district for new facilities.

434 (c) It is hereby declared that the amount of any impact
435 fees authorized in this section will be just, reasonable, and
436 equitable.

437 (2) No person shall issue or obtain a building permit for
438 new residential dwelling units or new commercial or industrial
439 structures within the district, or issue or obtain construction
440 plan approval for new mobile home or recreational or travel
441 trailer park developments located within the district, until the
442 developer thereof has paid the applicable impact fee to the
443 district, according to a schedule determined by the board
444 pursuant to general law.

445 (3) The impact fees collected by the district pursuant to
446 this section shall be kept as a separate fund from other
447 revenues of the district and shall be used exclusively for the
448 acquisition, purchase, or construction of new facilities or
449 portions thereof required to provide fire protection and
450 emergency services to new construction. "New facilities" means
451 land, buildings, and capital equipment, including, but not

452 limited to, fire and emergency vehicles and radio-telemetry
453 equipment, and other firefighting or rescue equipment. Said fees
454 shall not be used for the acquisition, purchase, or construction
455 of facilities that must be obtained in any event, regardless of
456 growth within the district. The board of fire commissioners
457 shall maintain adequate records to ensure that impact fees are
458 expended only for permissible new facilities or equipment.

459 (4) Any impact fees shall be authorized by resolution of
460 the board of fire commissioners and shall comply with the
461 requirements of sections 163.31801 and 191.009(4), Florida
462 Statutes (2006), or any other applicable general law.

463 Section 17. Other district powers, functions, and
464 duties.--In addition to any powers set forth in this act, the
465 district shall hold all powers, functions, and duties set forth
466 in chapters 189, 191, and 197, Florida Statutes, including, but
467 not limited to, ad valorem taxation, bond issuance, other
468 revenue-raising capabilities, impact fees, budget preparation
469 and approval, liens and foreclosure of liens, use of tax deeds
470 and tax certificates as appropriate for non-ad valorem
471 assessments, and contractual agreements. The district may be
472 financed by any method established in this act, chapter 189,
473 Florida Statutes, chapter 191, Florida Statutes, or any other
474 applicable general or special law.

475 Section 4. Severability.--If any provision of this act or
476 the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held
477 invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or
478 applications of the act which can be given effect without the
479 invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions

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480 of this act are declared severable.

481 Section 5. Liberal interpretation.--The provisions of this
482 act shall be liberally construed in order to effectively carry
483 out the purpose of this act in the interest of the public and
484 safety.

485 Section 6. Chapters 89-502, 91-406, and 96-452, Laws of
486 Florida, are repealed.

487 Section 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.