

By Senator Constantine

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the protection of springs; creating
3 part IV of ch. 369, F.S.; providing a short title;
4 providing legislative findings and intent with respect
5 to the need to protect and restore springs and ground
6 water; providing an effective date.

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

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10 Section 1. Part IV of chapter 369, Florida Statutes,
11 consisting of sections 369.401 and 369.402, is created to read:

12 369.401 Short title.—This part may be cited as the “Florida
13 Springs Protection Act.”

14 369.402 Legislative findings and intent.—The Legislature
15 finds that:

16 (1) Florida’s springs are a precious and fragile natural
17 resource that must be protected. Springs provide recreational
18 opportunities for swimmers, canoeists, wildlife watchers, cave
19 divers, and others. Because of the recreational opportunities
20 and accompanying tourism, many of the state’s springs greatly
21 benefit state and local economies. In addition, springs provide
22 critical habitat for plants and animals, including many
23 endangered or threatened species, and serve as indicators of
24 groundwater and surface water quality.

25 (2) In general, Florida’s springs, whether found in urban
26 or rural settings, or on public or private lands, are threatened
27 by actual, or potential, flow reductions and declining water
28 quality. Many of Florida’s springs show signs of ecological
29 imbalance, increased nutrient loading, and lowered water flow.

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30 The groundwater sources of spring discharges are recharged by
31 seepage from the surface and through direct conduits such as
32 sinkholes and can be adversely affected by polluted runoff from
33 urban and agricultural lands and discharges resulting from poor
34 wastewater management practices.

35 (3) Springs and ground water can be restored through good
36 stewardship, including effective planning strategies, best-
37 management practices, and appropriate regulatory programs that
38 preserve and protect the springs and their springsheds.

39 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2010.