

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 6027 Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council, Citrus County

SPONSOR(S): Massullo

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 388

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 118 Y's 0 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 6027 passed the House on February 5, 2020, and subsequently passed the Senate on March 3, 2020. The bill also passed the House and Senate in CS/HB 7039 on March 12, 2020.

The Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council (Council) was established in 2003 by the Legislature in response to regional concerns for the health of Citrus and Hernando county waterways. The Council is comprised of 14 voting members appointed by the Legislature and includes, from each county, two waterfront property owners, an attorney, a member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, an environmental engineer, an engineer, and a person with training in biology or another scientific discipline.

It is the Council's responsibility to review audits and all data specifically related to lake and river restoration techniques and sport fish population recovery strategies, evaluate whether additional studies are needed, explore all possible sources of funding to conduct restoration activities, and report to the Legislature on the progress made and any recommendations for the next fiscal year. The Council last submitted an annual report in 2015.

In 2014, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) created the Springs Coast Steering, Management, and Technical Committees to manage and prioritize the five first-magnitude springs that fall within the jurisdiction of the district. Each committee includes members representing the local, regional, and state governments as well as the agriculture industry, environmental organizations, water suppliers, industrial water users, regional planning councils, and academia. According to SWFWMD, much of the work of the committees coincides with the charge of the Council.

The bill repeals the Council.

The bill may have an insignificant positive fiscal impact on the state.

The bill was approved by the Governor on September 4, 2020, ch. 2020-168, L.O.F., and became effective on that date.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Background

Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council

The Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council (Council) was established in 2003 by the Legislature in response to regional concerns for the health of Citrus and Hernando county waterways.¹ The Council, created within the Withlacoochee and Coastal Rivers Basin Boards of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), is comprised of 14 voting members: seven members appointed by the President of the Senate and seven members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The members include:

- Two waterfront property owners from each county, one from the east side and one from the west side of the 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 with training in biology or another scientific discipline from each county.²

The Council members from each county were required to form two separate county task forces to assess and make recommendations on waterways within their respective counties. The Citrus County Task Force was directed to develop plans for restoring the Tsala-Apopka Chain of Lakes, while the Hernando County Task Force was directed to develop plans for restoring the Weeki Wachee River and Springs.³

In addition, the Legislature established a technical advisory group (TAG) to assist the Council and two county task forces by informing the members on the scientific and technical issues regarding water quality within the area.⁴ The TAG consists of one representative each from SWFWMD, 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, the public works department of each county, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.⁵

It is the Council's responsibility 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; evaluate whether additional studies are needed; explore all possible sources of funding to conduct restoration activities; and report to the Legislature, before November 25 of each year, on the progress made and any recommendations for the next fiscal year.⁶ In 2006, the Legislature expanded the Council's responsibilities to include all waterways of Citrus and Hernando Counties.⁷ The Council last submitted an annual report in 2015.

¹ Chapter 2003-287, Laws of Fla.; see MGC Environmental, *Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council*, available at <http://www.mgcenvironmental.com/waterways.htm> (last visited Oct. 30, 2019).

² Chapter 2006-43, Laws of Fla.

³ Chapter 2003-287, Laws of Fla.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Chapter 2006-43, Laws of Fla.

⁶ See SWFWMD, Council Report to the Legislature, 1 (2015), available at <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/sites/default/files/medias/documents/2015%20Report%20to%20the%20Legislature.pdf> (last visited Oct. 30, 2019); ch. 2003-287, Laws of Fla.

⁷ Chapter 2006-43, Laws of Fla.

Springs Coast Committees

In 2014, SWFWMD created the Springs Coast Steering, Management, and Technical Committees to manage and prioritize the five first-magnitude springs that fall within the jurisdiction of the district: Rainbow, Crystal River/Kings Bay, Homosassa, Chassahowitzka, and Weeki Wachee.⁸ Each committee includes members representing the local, regional, and state governments as well as the agriculture industry, environmental organizations, water suppliers, industrial water users, regional planning councils, and academia.⁹ According to SWFWMD, much of the work of the committees coincides with the charge of the Council.¹⁰

Effect of the Bill

The bill repeals the Council.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill may have an insignificant positive fiscal impact on state agency expenditures because state agencies and SWFWMD will no longer be required to expend resources or provide staff support to the Council.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

⁸ SWFWMD, *Springs Coast Steering, Management and Technical Committees*, available at <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/springs/springs-coast-steering-management-and-technical-committees> (last visited Oct. 31, 2019).

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Email from Cara Martin, Government and Community Affairs Office Chief, SWFWMD, Council, (Sept. 3, 2019) (on file with the Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee).