By Senator Stewart

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to implementation of the recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force; amending s. 381.0065, F.S.; requiring owners of certain onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems to have the systems periodically inspected, beginning on a specified date; requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to administer the inspection program; requiring the department to implement program standards, procedures, and requirements; providing for rulemaking; amending s. 403.067, F.S.; requiring new or revised basin management action plans to include a list that identifies and prioritizes certain spatially focused projects; requiring the department to assess certain projects; providing requirements for the assessments; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, Governor Ron DeSantis created the Blue-Green Algae Task Force in 2019 to "improve water quality for the benefit of all Floridians," and the task force's consensus report was issued in October 2019, with multiple recommendations for basin management action plans, agriculture, human waste, stormwater, technology, public health, and science, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that in June 2020, Governor DeSantis signed Senate Bill 712, the Clean Waterways Act, which implemented many of the recommendations of the task force, and

WHEREAS, full implementation of the task force's recommendations requires enactment of additional substantive

legislation, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

Section 1. Present subsections (5) through (8) of section 381.0065, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (6) through (9), respectively, and a new subsection (5) is added to that section, to read:

381.0065 Onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems; regulation.—

(5) PERIODIC INSPECTIONS.—Effective July 1, 2025, the owner of an onsite sewage treatment and disposal system, excluding a system required to have an operating permit, must have the system inspected at least once every 5 years to assess the fundamental operational condition of the system, prolong the life of the system, and identify any failure within the system. The department shall administer an onsite sewage treatment and disposal system inspection program for such periodic inspections. The department shall implement the program standards, procedures, and requirements and adopt rules that must include, at a minimum, all of the following:

(a) A schedule for a 5-year inspection cycle.

(b) A county-by-county implementation plan phased in over a 10-year period, with first priority given to those areas within a priority focus area for springs identified by the department.

(c) Minimum standards for a functioning system.

(d) Requirements for the pumpout or repair of a failing system.

(e) Enforcement procedures for failure of a system owner to

obtain an inspection of the system and failure of a contractor to timely report inspection results to the department and the system owner.

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (7) of section 403.067, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

403.067 Establishment and implementation of total maximum daily loads.—

(7) DEVELOPMENT OF BASIN MANAGEMENT PLANS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS.—

(a) *Basin management action plans.*—

1. In developing and implementing the total maximum daily load for a water body, the department, or the department in conjunction with a water management district, may develop a basin management action plan that addresses some or all of the watersheds and basins tributary to the water body. Such plan must integrate the appropriate management strategies available to the state through existing water quality protection programs to achieve the total maximum daily loads and may provide for phased implementation of these management strategies to promote timely, cost-effective actions as provided for in s. 403.151. The plan must establish a schedule implementing the management strategies, establish a basis for evaluating the plan's effectiveness, and identify feasible funding strategies for implementing the plan's management strategies. The management strategies may include regional treatment systems or other public works, when appropriate, and voluntary trading of water quality credits to achieve the needed pollutant load reductions.

2. A basin management action plan must equitably allocate, pursuant to paragraph (6)(b), pollutant reductions to individual

basins, as a whole to all basins, or to each identified point source or category of nonpoint sources, as appropriate. For nonpoint sources for which best management practices have been adopted, the initial requirement specified by the plan must be those practices developed pursuant to paragraph (c). When appropriate, the plan may take into account the benefits of pollutant load reduction achieved by point or nonpoint sources that have implemented management strategies to reduce pollutant loads, including best management practices, before the development of the basin management action plan. The plan must also identify the mechanisms that will address potential future increases in pollutant loading.

3. The basin management action planning process is intended to involve the broadest possible range of interested parties, with the objective of encouraging the greatest amount of cooperation and consensus possible. In developing a basin management action plan, the department shall assure that key stakeholders, including, but not limited to, applicable local governments, water management districts, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, other appropriate state agencies, local soil and water conservation districts, environmental groups, regulated interests, and affected pollution sources, are invited to participate in the process. The department shall hold at least one public meeting in the vicinity of the watershed or basin to discuss and receive comments during the planning process and shall otherwise encourage public participation to the greatest practicable extent. Notice of the public meeting must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in each county in which the

watershed or basin lies at least 5 days, but not more than 15 days, before the public meeting. A basin management action plan does not supplant or otherwise alter any assessment made under subsection (3) or subsection (4) or any calculation or initial allocation.

4.a. Each new or revised basin management action plan must ~~shall~~ include:

(I)~~a.~~ The appropriate management strategies available through existing water quality protection programs to achieve total maximum daily loads, which may provide for phased implementation to promote timely, cost-effective actions as provided for in s. 403.151;

(II)~~b.~~ A description of best management practices adopted by rule;

(III)~~c.~~ A list of projects in priority ranking with a planning-level cost estimate and estimated date of completion for each listed project;

(IV) A list that identifies and prioritizes spatially focused suites of projects in areas likely to yield maximum pollutant reductions;

(V)~~d.~~ The source and amount of financial assistance to be made available by the department, a water management district, or other entity for each listed project, if applicable; and

(VI)~~e.~~ A planning-level estimate of each listed project's expected load reduction, if applicable.

b. For each project listed pursuant to this subparagraph which has a total cost that exceeds $1 million, the department must assess through integrated and comprehensive monitoring whether the project is working to reduce nutrient pollution or

water use, or both, as intended. These assessments must be completed expeditiously and included in each basin management action plan update.

5. The department shall adopt all or any part of a basin management action plan and any amendment to such plan by secretarial order pursuant to chapter 120 to implement this section.

6. The basin management action plan must include milestones for implementation and water quality improvement, and an associated water quality monitoring component sufficient to evaluate whether reasonable progress in pollutant load reductions is being achieved over time. An assessment of progress toward these milestones shall be conducted every 5 years, and revisions to the plan shall be made as appropriate. Revisions to the basin management action plan shall be made by the department in cooperation with basin stakeholders. Revisions to the management strategies required for nonpoint sources must follow the procedures in subparagraph (c)4. Revised basin management action plans must be adopted pursuant to subparagraph 5.

7. In accordance with procedures adopted by rule under paragraph (9)(c), basin management action plans, and other pollution control programs under local, state, or federal authority as provided in subsection (4), may allow point or nonpoint sources that will achieve greater pollutant reductions than required by an adopted total maximum daily load or wasteload allocation to generate, register, and trade water quality credits for the excess reductions to enable other sources to achieve their allocation; however, the generation of

water quality credits does not remove the obligation of a source or activity to meet applicable technology requirements or adopted best management practices. Such plans must allow trading between NPDES permittees, and trading that may or may not involve NPDES permittees, where the generation or use of the credits involve an entity or activity not subject to department water discharge permits whose owner voluntarily elects to obtain department authorization for the generation and sale of credits.

8. The department's rule relating to the equitable abatement of pollutants into surface waters do not apply to water bodies or water body segments for which a basin management plan that takes into account future new or expanded activities or discharges has been adopted under this section.

9. In order to promote resilient wastewater utilities, if the department identifies domestic wastewater treatment facilities or onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems as contributors of at least 20 percent of point source or nonpoint source nutrient pollution or if the department determines remediation is necessary to achieve the total maximum daily load, a basin management action plan for a nutrient total maximum daily load must include the following:

a. A wastewater treatment plan developed by each local government, in cooperation with the department, the water management district, and the public and private domestic wastewater treatment facilities within the jurisdiction of the local government, that addresses domestic wastewater. The wastewater treatment plan must:

(I) Provide for construction, expansion, or upgrades necessary to achieve the total maximum daily load requirements

applicable to the domestic wastewater treatment facility.

(II) Include the permitted capacity in average annual gallons per day for the domestic wastewater treatment facility; the average nutrient concentration and the estimated average nutrient load of the domestic wastewater; a projected timeline of the dates by which the construction of any facility improvements will begin and be completed and the date by which operations of the improved facility will begin; the estimated cost of the improvements; and the identity of responsible parties.

The wastewater treatment plan must be adopted as part of the basin management action plan no later than July 1, 2025. A local government that does not have a domestic wastewater treatment facility in its jurisdiction is not required to develop a wastewater treatment plan unless there is a demonstrated need to establish a domestic wastewater treatment facility within its jurisdiction to improve water quality necessary to achieve a total maximum daily load. A local government is not responsible for a private domestic wastewater facility's compliance with a basin management action plan unless such facility is operated through a public-private partnership to which the local government is a party.

b. An onsite sewage treatment and disposal system remediation plan developed by each local government in cooperation with the department, the Department of Health, water management districts, and public and private domestic wastewater treatment facilities.

(I) The onsite sewage treatment and disposal system

remediation plan must identify cost-effective and financially feasible projects necessary to achieve the nutrient load reductions required for onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems. To identify cost-effective and financially feasible projects for remediation of onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems, the local government shall:

(A) Include an inventory of onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems based on the best information available;

(B) Identify onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems that would be eliminated through connection to existing or future central domestic wastewater infrastructure in the jurisdiction or domestic wastewater service area of the local government, that would be replaced with or upgraded to enhanced nutrient-reducing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems, or that would remain on conventional onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems;

(C) Estimate the costs of potential onsite sewage treatment and disposal system connections, upgrades, or replacements; and

(D) Identify deadlines and interim milestones for the planning, design, and construction of projects.

(II) The department shall adopt the onsite sewage treatment and disposal system remediation plan as part of the basin management action plan no later than July 1, 2025, or as required for Outstanding Florida Springs under s. 373.807.

10. When identifying wastewater projects in a basin management action plan, the department may not require the higher cost option if it achieves the same nutrient load reduction as a lower cost option. A regulated entity may choose a different cost option if it complies with the pollutant

reduction requirements of an adopted total maximum daily load and meets or exceeds the pollution reduction requirement of the original project.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.