

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to funding for environmental resource
3 management; creating s. 380.095, F.S.; providing
4 legislative findings and intent; requiring the
5 Department of Revenue to deposit into the Indian
6 Gaming Revenue Trust Fund within the Department of
7 Financial Services a specified percentage of the
8 revenue share payments received under the gaming
9 compact between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the
10 State of Florida; providing requirements for the
11 distribution of such funds; creating s. 260.0145,
12 F.S.; creating the Local Trail Management Grant
13 Program within the Department of Environmental
14 Protection for a specified purpose; providing for the
15 administration and prioritization of awards;
16 specifying the authorized and prohibited uses of grant
17 funds; requiring the department to submit an annual
18 report to the Governor and the Legislature by a
19 specified date; providing requirements for the report;
20 amending s. 259.1055, F.S.; authorizing the Fish and
21 Wildlife Conservation Commission to enter into
22 voluntary agreements with private landowners for
23 environmental services within the wildlife corridor;
24 providing requirements for such agreements;
25 authorizing the use of land management funds;

26 | requiring the Land Management Uniform Accounting
27 | Council to recommend the efficient and effective use
28 | of certain funds available to state agencies for land
29 | management activities; providing requirements for such
30 | recommendations; requiring the council to adopt and
31 | submit its initial recommendation to the Executive
32 | Office of the Governor and the Legislature by a
33 | specified date; requiring biennial updates; amending
34 | s. 403.0673, F.S.; revising the projects the
35 | department is required to prioritize within the water
36 | quality improvement grant program; revising the
37 | components required for the grant program's annual
38 | report; providing appropriations; requiring the
39 | department to coordinate with the Water School at
40 | Florida Gulf Coast University for specified purposes;
41 | requiring the Water School to conduct a specified
42 | study; providing requirements for the study; requiring
43 | the department to submit a report to the Executive
44 | Office of the Governor and the Legislature by a
45 | specified date; providing appropriations; requiring
46 | the South Florida Water Management District to enter
47 | into a contract with the Water School at Florida Gulf
48 | Coast University to conduct a study of the health and
49 | ecosystem of Lake Okeechobee; providing requirements
50 | for the study; requiring a report to the Executive

51 Office of the Governor and the Legislature by a
 52 specified date; authorizing the Department of
 53 Environmental Protection to submit budget amendments
 54 for the release of specified funds; providing an
 55 effective date.

56
 57 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

58
 59 Section 1. Section 380.095, Florida Statutes, is created
 60 to read:

61 380.095 Dedicated funding for conservation lands,
 62 resiliency, and clean water infrastructure.—

63 (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—The Legislature recognizes that
 64 the conservation and preservation of the land and water
 65 resources of this state are essential to maintaining the quality
 66 of life enjoyed by Floridians and to sustaining and growing a
 67 thriving state economy, including legacy industries such as
 68 tourism, agriculture, and fishing.

69 (a) The Legislature recognizes that historic investments
 70 in land conservation have fostered and will continue to foster
 71 the preservation of Florida's heritage, allow for the strategic
 72 expansion and interconnectivity of the Florida wildlife
 73 corridor, and promote the protection of crucial habitat
 74 necessary for the survival, protection, and recovery of

75 threatened and endangered native species, including the Florida
76 panther.

77 (b) The Legislature further recognizes that as the state
78 acquires land, the state needs to be a good steward of the land,
79 which necessitates the need for a commitment to provide funding
80 at levels sufficient to ensure the proper management of such
81 lands. These investments provide opportunities for expanded
82 public access to state lands, including state parks, the Florida
83 Greenways and Trails System, and game lands, among others, for
84 recreation; and promote opportunities to protect such lands from
85 wildfire damage and the infiltration of dangerous nonnative
86 plant and animal species, among other benefits.

87 (c) The Legislature finds that the state is particularly
88 vulnerable to adverse impacts from increases in the frequency
89 and duration of rainfall events and sea level rise. The
90 consequences of such events not only endanger human lives and
91 properties, but also threaten Florida's natural habitats and
92 biodiversity. The Legislature further recognizes that enhancing
93 the state's resiliency to storm events and sea level rise is
94 essential to Florida's economic stability and growth.

95 (d) Furthermore, the Legislature recognizes the need for
96 additional revenue sources to address the gap in funding needs
97 necessary to address water quality impacts, and that the
98 projections for significant population growth further exacerbate
99 such need.

100 (e) Therefore, the Legislature finds that it is in the
 101 best interest of the residents of the State of Florida to
 102 dedicate revenues from the gaming compact between the Seminole
 103 Tribe of Florida and the State of Florida to acquire and manage
 104 conservation lands, and to make significant investments in
 105 resiliency efforts and clean water infrastructure.

106 (2) DISTRIBUTION.—Notwithstanding s. 285.710, the
 107 Department of Revenue shall, upon receipt, deposit 96 percent of
 108 any revenue share payment received under the compact as defined
 109 in s. 285.710 into the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund within
 110 the Department of Financial Services. The funds deposited into
 111 the trust fund shall be distributed as follows:

112 (a) The sum of \$100 million to support the Florida
 113 wildlife corridor as defined in s. 259.1055, including the
 114 acquisition of lands or conservation easements within the
 115 Florida wildlife corridor. To be eligible for funding, the
 116 acquisition project must be included on a land acquisition
 117 priority list developed pursuant to s. 259.035 or s. 570.71. The
 118 funds must be appropriated in Administered Funds each fiscal
 119 year. Eligible state agencies may, on a first-come, first-served
 120 basis, submit a budget amendment to request release of funds
 121 pursuant to chapter 216. Release is contingent upon approval, if
 122 required.

123 (b) The sum of \$100 million for the management of uplands
 124 and the removal of invasive species, which must be divided as
 125 follows:

126 1. Thirty-six million to the Department of Environmental
 127 Protection, of which:

128 a. Thirty-two million to the State Park Trust Fund within
 129 the department for land management activities within the state
 130 park system; and

131 b. Four million to the Internal Improvement Trust Fund
 132 within the department for the purpose of implementing the Local
 133 Trail Management Grant Program created pursuant to s. 260.0145.

134 2. Thirty-two million to the Incidental Trust Fund within
 135 the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for land
 136 management activities.

137 3. Thirty-two million to the State Game Trust Fund within
 138 the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for land
 139 management activities, including management activities for
 140 gopher tortoises and Florida panthers.

141
 142 For sub-subparagraph 1.a. and subparagraphs 2. and 3., a land
 143 manager may not use more than 25 percent of the distribution for
 144 operation capital outlay or capital assets.

145 (c) The sum of \$100 million to the Resilient Florida Trust
 146 Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection for the

147 Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan to be used
 148 in accordance with s. 380.093.

149 (d) The remainder to the Water Protection and
 150 Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the Department of
 151 Environmental Protection for the Water Quality Improvement Grant
 152 Program, to be used in accordance with s. 403.0673.

153 Section 2. Section 260.0145, Florida Statutes, is created
 154 to read:

155 260.0145 Local Trail Management Grant Program.—

156 (1) The Local Trail Management Grant Program is created
 157 within the department to assist local governments with costs
 158 associated with the operation and maintenance of trails within
 159 the Florida Greenways and Trails System. Funding for the program
 160 is subject to appropriation.

161 (2) A local government may receive multiple grant awards
 162 per application cycle.

163 (3) The department shall give priority to each of the
 164 following:

165 (a) A local government that provides cost share for the
 166 costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the
 167 trails, except for trails within fiscally constrained counties
 168 or rural areas of opportunity.

169 (b) Trails within the Florida wildlife corridor as defined
 170 in s. 259.1055.

171 (4) A local government may only use grant funds for the
 172 operation and maintenance of trails, including, but not limited
 173 to, the purchase of equipment and capital assets; the funding of
 174 necessary repairs to ensure the safety of trail users; and other
 175 necessary maintenance, such as pressure washing, bush pruning,
 176 and clearing debris. A local government may not use grant funds
 177 for the planning, design, or construction of trails.

178 (5) Beginning January 15, 2025, and each January 15
 179 thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the
 180 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
 181 House of Representatives in accordance with s. 286.001 listing
 182 the grants awarded pursuant to this section. The report must
 183 include the following information for each grant award: the
 184 grant recipient's name, a description of the individual
 185 components of the trail, a description of the maintenance
 186 activities funded, the total management cost for the trail
 187 components, and the cost share, if any, provided by the
 188 recipient.

189 Section 3. Present subsection (6) of section 259.1055,
 190 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (7), and a new
 191 subsection (6) is added to that section, to read:

192 259.1055 Florida wildlife corridor.—

193 (6) MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES.—The Fish and Wildlife
 194 Conservation Commission is authorized to enter into voluntary

195 agreements with private landowners for environmental services
 196 within the Florida wildlife corridor.

197 (a) The agreements must require that the landowner protect
 198 and restore water resources; improve management of wildlife
 199 habitat, including the long-term conservation of forest and
 200 grassland soils and native plants; manage the land in a manner
 201 that keeps the desired ecosystem healthy for protected species,
 202 such as the gopher tortoise and the Florida panther; or provide
 203 other incentives to landowners to continue and improve land uses
 204 that are both economically sustainable and beneficial to the
 205 environment of this state.

206 (b) The commission shall ensure that any agreement for
 207 environmental services entered into requires the landowner to
 208 manage the land in a manner that improves or enhances the land
 209 beyond what is required under any other agreement or contract
 210 the landowner may have with the state.

211 (c) Subject to appropriation, the commission may use land
 212 management funds received pursuant to s. 380.095 for this
 213 purpose.

214 Section 4. (1) The Land Management Uniform Accounting
 215 Council (LMUAC) shall recommend the most efficient and effective
 216 use of the funds available to state agencies for land management
 217 activities pursuant to s. 380.095, Florida Statutes. The
 218 recommendations must be based on a review of the resources of
 219 each land management agency to determine current expenditures,

220 including personnel costs, spent specifically on upland
221 management activities and invasive species removal. The
222 recommendations must include a calculation methodology to
223 distribute the funds to the state agencies specified in s.
224 380.095(2)(b), Florida Statutes.

225 (2) The LMUAC shall adopt its initial recommendation and
226 submit it to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President
227 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
228 by January 3, 2027. Thereafter, the LMUAC shall update its
229 recommendation in the biennial report developed pursuant to s.
230 259.037, Florida Statutes.

231 Section 5. Subsections (3) and (7) of section 403.0673,
232 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

233 403.0673 Water quality improvement grant program.—A grant
234 program is established within the Department of Environmental
235 Protection to address wastewater, stormwater, and agricultural
236 sources of nutrient loading to surface water or groundwater.

237 (3) The department shall consider and prioritize those
238 projects that:

239 (a) Have the maximum estimated reduction in nutrient load
240 per project;

241 (b) Demonstrate project readiness;

242 (c) Are cost-effective;

243 (d) Have a cost share identified by the applicant, except
244 for rural areas of opportunity;

245 (e) Have multi-year project implementation schedules with
 246 previous state commitment and involvement in the project,
 247 considering previously funded phases, the total amount of
 248 previous state funding, and previous partial appropriations for
 249 the proposed project; ~~or~~

250 (f) Are in a location where reductions are needed most to
 251 attain the water quality standards of a waterbody not attaining
 252 nutrient or nutrient-related standards; or

253 (g) Were determined eligible in a previous application
 254 cycle and were able to demonstrate project readiness but were
 255 not awarded a grant.

256
 257 Any project that does not result in reducing nutrient loading to
 258 a waterbody identified in subsection (1) is not eligible for
 259 funding under this section.

260 (7) Beginning January 15, 2024, and each January 15
 261 thereafter, the department shall submit a report regarding the
 262 projects funded pursuant to this section to the Governor, the
 263 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
 264 Representatives. The report must include a list of those
 265 projects receiving funding and those projects not receiving
 266 funding which were determined eligible by the department and
 267 were able to demonstrate project readiness. The report must
 268 include ~~and~~ the following information for each project:

269 (a) A description of the project;

- 270 (b) The cost of the project;
- 271 (c) The estimated nutrient load reduction of the project;
- 272 (d) The location of the project;
- 273 (e) The waterbody or waterbodies where the project will
- 274 reduce nutrients; ~~and~~
- 275 (f) The total cost share being provided for the project;
- 276 and
- 277 (g) The progress made in the implementation of multi-year
- 278 projects, including the funds spent, remaining costs, and
- 279 remaining timeline for full implementation.

280 Section 6. Contingent upon sufficient funds being

281 distributed to the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund pursuant to

282 s. 380.095, Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year,

283 the sum of \$2 million in recurring funds from the General

284 Revenue Fund is appropriated to the University of Florida to

285 continually update the Florida Wildlife Corridor plan and the

286 Florida Ecological Greenways Network plan.

287 Section 7. Contingent upon sufficient funds being

288 distributed to the Department of Environmental Protection

289 pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(c), Florida Statutes, and for the

290 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$5 million in nonrecurring

291 funds from the Water Protection and Sustainability Trust Fund

292 within the Department of Environmental Protection is

293 appropriated to the department to coordinate with the Water

294 School at Florida Gulf Coast University to conduct a study to

295 identify and analyze potential regional projects that meet the
296 eligibility criteria set forth in s. 403.0673, Florida Statutes.
297 At a minimum, the study must include the collection and
298 consolidation of data regarding water quality to identify
299 potential regional projects, including stormwater, hydrologic
300 improvements, and innovative technologies, which reduce nutrient
301 loading to water bodies identified in s. 403.0673(1), Florida
302 Statutes. The department shall submit the report to the
303 Executive Office of the Governor, the President of the Senate,
304 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 3,
305 2025.

306 Section 8. Contingent upon sufficient funds being
307 distributed to the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund within the
308 Department of Financial Services pursuant to s. 380.095, Florida
309 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$100
310 million in nonrecurring funds from trust funds is appropriated
311 to Administered Funds for land acquisition pursuant to s.
312 380.095(2)(a), Florida Statutes.

313 Section 9. Contingent upon sufficient funds being
314 distributed to the Department of Environmental Protection
315 pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)1., Florida Statutes, and for the
316 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$4 million in nonrecurring
317 funds from the Internal Improvement Trust Fund within the
318 Department of Environmental Protection is appropriated for the
319 purpose of implementing the Local Trail Management Grant Program

320 created pursuant to s. 260.0145, Florida Statutes.

321 Section 10. Contingent upon sufficient funds being
322 distributed to the Department of Environmental Protection
323 pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)1., Florida Statutes, and for the
324 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$32 million in nonrecurring
325 funds from the State Park Trust Fund within the Department of
326 Environmental Protection is appropriated for land management
327 activities as specified in s. 380.095(2)(b)1., Florida Statutes.

328 Section 11. Contingent upon sufficient funds being
329 distributed to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
330 Services pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)2., Florida Statutes, and
331 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$32 million in
332 nonrecurring funds from the Incidental Trust Fund within the
333 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is appropriated
334 for land management activities as specified in s.
335 380.095(2)(b)2., Florida Statutes.

336 Section 12. Contingent upon sufficient funds being
337 distributed to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
338 pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)3., Florida Statutes, and for the
339 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$32 million in nonrecurring
340 funds from the State Game Trust Fund within the Fish and
341 Wildlife Conservation Commission is appropriated for control of
342 invasive species and upland land management activities pursuant
343 to s. 380.095(2)(b)3., Florida Statutes, or s. 259.1055, Florida
344 Statutes.

345 Section 13. Contingent upon sufficient funds being
346 distributed to the Resilient Florida Trust Fund pursuant to s.
347 380.095(2)(c), Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal
348 year, the sum of \$100 million in nonrecurring funds from the
349 Resilient Florida Trust Fund within the Department of
350 Environmental Protection is appropriated for the Statewide
351 Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan pursuant to s.
352 380.093, Florida Statutes.

353 Section 14. Contingent upon sufficient funds being
354 distributed to the Water Protection and Sustainability Program
355 Trust Fund pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(d), Florida Statutes, and
356 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$79 million in
357 nonrecurring funds from the Water Protection and Sustainability
358 Program Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental
359 Protection is appropriated for the Water Quality Improvement
360 Grant Program pursuant to s. 403.0673, Florida Statutes.

361 Section 15. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$150
362 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
363 appropriated in the Aid to Local Governments - Grants and Aids -
364 South Florida Water Management District - Operations
365 appropriation category to the South Florida Water Management
366 District for operations and maintenance responsibilities under
367 the purview of the district. The funds must be placed in
368 reserve. From the funds, the district shall enter into a
369 contract with the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University

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370 to conduct a study of the health and ecosystem of Lake
371 Okeechobee. The study must take into account the health of
372 plant, fish, and wildlife to be used for future planning of
373 invasive plant control, replanting of native vegetation, and
374 fish and game management. The study must be submitted by January
375 1, 2025, to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President
376 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
377 The Department of Environmental Protection is authorized to
378 submit budget amendments to request release of funds pursuant to
379 chapter 216, Florida Statutes. Release is contingent upon the
380 submission of a spend plan and negotiated draft contract between
381 the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Gulf
382 Coast University Water School.

383 Section 16. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
384 law.