

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 Clearing Trust Fund within the
7 Department of Financial Services a specified
8 percentage of the revenue share payments received
9 under the gaming compact between the Seminole Tribe of
10 Florida and the State of Florida; providing
11 requirements for the distribution of such funds;
12 creating s. 260.0145, F.S.; creating the Local Trail
13 Management Grant Program within the Department of
14 Environmental Protection for a specified purpose;
15 providing for the administration and prioritization of
16 awards; specifying the authorized and prohibited uses
17 of grant funds; requiring the department to submit an
18 annual 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 Clearing Trust Fund
110 within the Department of Financial Services. The funds deposited
111 into the trust fund shall be distributed as follows:

112 (a) The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million each
113 fiscal year to support the Florida wildlife corridor as defined
114 in s. 259.1055, including the acquisition of lands or
115 conservation easements within the Florida wildlife corridor. To
116 be eligible for funding, the acquisition project must be
117 included on a land acquisition priority list developed pursuant
118 to s. 259.035 or s. 570.71. The funds must be appropriated in
119 Administered Funds each fiscal year. Eligible state agencies
120 may, on a first-come, first-served basis, submit a budget
121 amendment to request release of funds pursuant to chapter 216.
122 Release is contingent upon approval, if required.

123 (b) The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million each
124 fiscal year for the management of uplands and the removal of

125 invasive species. From these funds, amounts shall be applied as
126 follows:

127 1. The lesser of 36 percent or \$36 million to the
128 Department of Environmental Protection, of which:

129 a. The lesser of 88.889 percent of the funds available
130 pursuant to subparagraph 1. or \$32 million to the State Park
131 Trust Fund within the department for land management activities
132 within the state park system; and

133 b. The lesser of 11.111 percent of the funds available
134 pursuant to subparagraph 1. or \$4 million to the Internal
135 Improvement Trust Fund within the department for the purpose of
136 implementing the Local Trail Management Grant Program created
137 pursuant to s. 260.0145.

138 2. The lesser of 32 percent or \$32 million to the
139 Incidental Trust Fund within the Department of Agriculture and
140 Consumer Services for land management activities.

141 3. The lesser of 32 percent or \$32 million to the State
142 Game Trust Fund within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
143 Commission for land management activities, including management
144 activities for gopher tortoises and Florida panthers.

145
146 For sub-subparagraph 1.a. and subparagraphs 2. and 3., a land
147 manager may not use more than 25 percent of the distribution for
148 operation capital outlay or capital assets.

149 (c) The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million each
 150 fiscal year to the Resilient Florida Trust Fund within the
 151 Department of Environmental Protection for the Statewide
 152 Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan to be used in
 153 accordance with s. 380.093.

154 (d) After the distributions pursuant to paragraphs (a),
 155 (b), and (c), the remainder each fiscal year to the Water
 156 Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the
 157 Department of Environmental Protection for the Water Quality
 158 Improvement Grant Program, to be used in accordance with s.
 159 403.0673.

160
 161 Allocations to trust funds shall be transferred monthly by
 162 nonoperating authority to the named trust fund.

163 Section 2. Section 260.0145, Florida Statutes, is created
 164 to read:

165 260.0145 Local Trail Management Grant Program.—

166 (1) The Local Trail Management Grant Program is created
 167 within the department to assist local governments with costs
 168 associated with the operation and maintenance of trails within
 169 the Florida Greenways and Trails System. Funding for the program
 170 is subject to appropriation.

171 (2) A local government may receive multiple grant awards
 172 per application cycle.

173 (3) The department shall give priority to each of the
174 following:

175 (a) A local government that provides cost share for the
176 costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the
177 trails, except for trails within fiscally constrained counties
178 or rural areas of opportunity.

179 (b) Trails within the Florida wildlife corridor as defined
180 in s. 259.1055.

181 (4) A local government may only use grant funds for the
182 operation and maintenance of trails, including, but not limited
183 to, the purchase of equipment and capital assets; the funding of
184 necessary repairs to ensure the safety of trail users; and other
185 necessary maintenance, such as pressure washing, bush pruning,
186 and clearing debris. A local government may not use grant funds
187 for the planning, design, or construction of trails.

188 (5) Beginning January 15, 2025, and each January 15
189 thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the
190 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
191 House of Representatives in accordance with s. 286.001 listing
192 the grants awarded pursuant to this section. The report must
193 include the following information for each grant award: the
194 grant recipient's name, a description of the individual
195 components of the trail, a description of the maintenance
196 activities funded, the total management cost for the trail
197 components, and the cost share, if any, provided by the

198 recipient.

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

202 259.1055 Florida wildlife corridor.—

203 (6) MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES.—The Fish and Wildlife
 204 Conservation Commission is authorized to enter into voluntary
 205 agreements with private landowners for environmental services
 206 within the Florida wildlife corridor.

207 (a) The agreements must require that the landowner protect
 208 and restore water resources; improve management of wildlife
 209 habitat, including the long-term conservation of forest and
 210 grassland soils and native plants; manage the land in a manner
 211 that keeps the desired ecosystem healthy for protected species,
 212 such as the gopher tortoise and the Florida panther; or provide
 213 other incentives to landowners to continue and improve land uses
 214 that are both economically sustainable and beneficial to the
 215 environment of this state.

216 (b) The commission shall ensure that any agreement for
 217 environmental services entered into requires the landowner to
 218 manage the land in a manner that improves or enhances the land
 219 beyond what is required under any other agreement or contract
 220 the landowner may have with the state.

221 (c) Subject to appropriation, the commission may use land
 222 management funds received pursuant to s. 380.095 for this

223 purpose.

224 Section 4. (1) The Land Management Uniform Accounting
225 Council (LMUAC) shall recommend the most efficient and effective
226 use of the funds available to state agencies for land management
227 activities pursuant to s. 380.095, Florida Statutes. The
228 recommendations must be based on a review of the resources of
229 each land management agency to determine current expenditures,
230 including personnel costs, spent specifically on upland
231 management activities and invasive species removal. The
232 recommendations must include a calculation methodology to
233 distribute the funds to the state agencies specified in s.
234 380.095(2)(b), Florida Statutes.

235 (2) The LMUAC shall adopt its initial recommendation and
236 submit it to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President
237 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
238 by January 3, 2027. Thereafter, the LMUAC shall update its
239 recommendation in the biennial report developed pursuant to s.
240 259.037, Florida Statutes.

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

243 403.0673 Water quality improvement grant program.—A grant
244 program is established within the Department of Environmental
245 Protection to address wastewater, stormwater, and agricultural
246 sources of nutrient loading to surface water or groundwater.

247 (3) The department shall consider and prioritize those
 248 projects that:
 249 (a) Have the maximum estimated reduction in nutrient load
 250 per project;
 251 (b) Demonstrate project readiness;
 252 (c) Are cost-effective;
 253 (d) Have a cost share identified by the applicant, except
 254 for rural areas of opportunity;
 255 (e) Have multi-year project implementation schedules with
 256 previous state commitment and involvement in the project,
 257 considering previously funded phases, the total amount of
 258 previous state funding, and previous partial appropriations for
 259 the proposed project; ~~or~~
 260 (f) Are in a location where reductions are needed most to
 261 attain the water quality standards of a waterbody not attaining
 262 nutrient or nutrient-related standards; or
 263 (g) Were determined eligible in a previous application
 264 cycle and were able to demonstrate project readiness but were
 265 not awarded a grant.
 266
 267 Any project that does not result in reducing nutrient loading to
 268 a waterbody identified in subsection (1) is not eligible for
 269 funding under this section.
 270 (7) Beginning January 15, 2024, and each January 15
 271 thereafter, the department shall submit a report regarding the

272 projects funded pursuant to this section to the Governor, the
 273 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
 274 Representatives. The report must include a list of those
 275 projects receiving funding and those projects not receiving
 276 funding which were determined eligible by the department and
 277 were able to demonstrate project readiness. The report must
 278 include ~~and~~ the following information for each project:

- 279 (a) A description of the project;
- 280 (b) The cost of the project;
- 281 (c) The estimated nutrient load reduction of the project;
- 282 (d) The location of the project;
- 283 (e) The waterbody or waterbodies where the project will
 284 reduce nutrients; ~~and~~
- 285 (f) The total cost share being provided for the project;
 286 and
- 287 (g) The progress made in the implementation of multi-year
 288 projects, including the funds spent, remaining costs, and
 289 remaining timeline for full implementation.

290 Section 6. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$2
 291 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General
 292 Revenue Fund to the University of Florida to continually update
 293 the Florida Wildlife Corridor plan and the Florida Ecological
 294 Greenways Network plan.

295 Section 7. From the funds distributed to the Department of
 296 Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(d), Florida

297 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$5
 298 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Water
 299 Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the
 300 Department of Environmental Protection to the department to
 301 coordinate with the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast
 302 University to conduct a study to identify and analyze potential
 303 regional projects that meet the eligibility criteria set forth
 304 in s. 403.0673, Florida Statutes. At a minimum, the study must
 305 include the collection and consolidation of data regarding water
 306 quality to identify potential regional projects, including
 307 stormwater, hydrologic improvements, and innovative
 308 technologies, which reduce nutrient loading to water bodies
 309 identified in s. 403.0673(1), Florida Statutes. The department
 310 shall submit the report to the Executive Office of the Governor,
 311 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
 312 Representatives by January 3, 2025.

313 Section 8. From the funds distributed to the Indian Gaming
 314 Revenue Clearing Trust Fund within the Department of Financial
 315 Services pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(a), Florida Statutes, and for
 316 the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$100 million in
 317 nonrecurring funds is appropriated from trust funds to
 318 Administered Funds for land acquisition pursuant to s.
 319 380.095(2)(a), Florida Statutes.

320 Section 9. From the funds distributed to the Department of
 321 Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)1., Florida

322 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$4
 323 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Internal
 324 Improvement Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental
 325 Protection for the purpose of implementing the Local Trail
 326 Management Grant Program created pursuant to s. 260.0145,
 327 Florida Statutes.

328 Section 10. From the funds distributed to the Department
 329 of Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)1.,
 330 Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of
 331 \$32 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the State
 332 Park Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental
 333 Protection for land management activities as specified in s.
 334 380.095(2)(b)1.a., Florida Statutes.

335 Section 11. From the funds distributed to the Department
 336 of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to s.
 337 380.095(2)(b)2., Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal
 338 year, the sum of \$32 million in nonrecurring funds is
 339 appropriated from the Incidental Trust Fund within the
 340 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for land
 341 management activities as specified in s. 380.095(2)(b)2.,
 342 Florida Statutes.

343 Section 12. From the funds distributed to the Fish and
 344 Wildlife Conservation Commission pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)3.,
 345 Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of
 346 \$32 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the State

347 Game Trust Fund within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
 348 Commission for control of invasive species and upland land
 349 management activities pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)3., Florida
 350 Statutes, or s. 259.1055, Florida Statutes.

351 Section 13. From the funds distributed to the Department
 352 of Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(c),
 353 Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of
 354 \$100 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the
 355 Resilient Florida Trust Fund within the Department of
 356 Environmental Protection for the Statewide Flooding and Sea
 357 Level Rise Resilience Plan pursuant to s. 380.093, Florida
 358 Statutes.

359 Section 14. From the funds distributed to the Department
 360 of Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(d),
 361 Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of
 362 \$79 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Water
 363 Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the
 364 Department of Environmental Protection for the Water Quality
 365 Improvement Grant Program pursuant to s. 403.0673, Florida
 366 Statutes.

367 Section 15. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$150
 368 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
 369 appropriated in the Aid to Local Governments - Grants and Aids -
 370 South Florida Water Management District - Operations
 371 appropriation category to the South Florida Water Management

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

389 Section 16. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law
390 if HB 7083 or similar legislation is adopted in the same
391 legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes a law.