A bill to be entitled

An act relating to service lateral assessment and rehabilitation; creating s. 403.4156, F.S.; providing purpose; providing definitions; requiring all utility systems to establish and maintain a comprehensive condition assessment program; providing requirements for such program; providing for enforcement and compliance; requiring utility systems to annually submit specified reports to the Department of Environmental Protection; providing penalties; providing for funding; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, numerous studies, including data from the Department of Environmental Protection and Water Environment Federation case analyses, indicate that a substantial percentage of infiltration and inflow into wastewater collection systems originates from private-side service laterals and lack of oversight and limited enforcement authority over privately owned lateral segments compound this issue, and

WHEREAS, in the past 20 years, the state's wastewater systems have spilled or improperly discharged over 2.5 billion gallons of raw or partially treated sewage into the environment and a significant portion reached waterways, causing catastrophic environmental damage and public health threats, and

WHEREAS, the state is projected to exceed 3 billion gallons

of sewage leakage since 2000, most of which can be traced back to failing or leaky lateral pipelines, and

WHEREAS, excessive infiltration from deteriorated service laterals frequently overloads utility treatment capacities, leading to sanitary sewer overflows and environmental hazards and these overflows compromise water quality, harm aquatic ecosystems, and pose severe public health risks, and

WHEREAS, insufficient monitoring and lack of clear remedial protocols for laterals have allowed structural defects and infiltration and inflow sources to remain largely unaddressed, and

WHEREAS, this act aims to rectify these deficiencies through uniform inspection, public transparency, and mandatory rehabilitation requirements, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

Section 1. Section 403.4156, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

403.4156 Florida Service Lateral Assessment and Rehabilitation Act.—

(1) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to:

(a) Ensure that all utility systems, public and private, deploy comprehensive inspection methods to evaluate the structural integrity and infiltration and inflow risks of

service laterals from the utility mainline connection to the edge of each building structure.

(b) Establish minimum requirements for data collection, long-term archiving, and accessible reporting, thereby enhancing infrastructure reliability and protecting Florida's water resources.

(c) Promote complete and proper structural rehabilitation of service laterals, ensuring a monolithic seal at the main and lateral connection point that mitigates infiltration, enhances infrastructure lifecycles, ensures environmental compliance, and lowers the risk of sanitary sewer overflow events.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section, the term:

(a) "CCTV lateral launch camera system" means a closed-circuit television inspection system capable of traversing from the mainline sewer into the service lateral for the purpose of visual evaluation.

(b) "Condition assessment program" means a structured inspection, data collection, and risk evaluation methodology designed to identify and prioritize structural and infiltration and inflow issues in sewer laterals.

(c) "Monolithic repair" means pipe repair or rehabilitation resulting in no joints or seams, including all points where the lateral connects to the structure, the mainline, and any required cleanouts, ensuring a fully sealed and continuous system.

(d) "NASSCO LACP protocols" means the National Association of Sewer Service Companies' Lateral Assessment Certification Program guidelines for standardized inspection, coding, and condition rating of sewer laterals.

(e) "Pipeline severity score" means a composite condition rating applied to each lateral pipeline after a proper assessment under NASSCO LACP protocols which includes both of the following:

1. The pipe rating index score.

2. The likelihood of failure score.

(f) "Service lateral" or "lateral" means the underground sewer pipeline that connects a property or building to a utility's mainline sewer pipe. The term includes the entire length of the lateral pipe from the utility system's mainline sewer to the edge of the building structure, and not just up to the property line or utility easement.

(g) "Utility system" means a government agency, a municipality, a private utility entity, or an entity under contract with such agencies or entities that owns, operates, or maintains sewer infrastructure in this state.

(3) CONDITION ASSESSMENT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

(a) Every utility system operating within this state shall establish and maintain a comprehensive condition assessment program for all service laterals under its jurisdiction.

1. This paragraph applies uniformly to all utility

systems, regardless of public or private ownership, size, or service area.

2. If a utility system chooses not to conduct the condition assessment program assessments directly, it may contract the assessments to a reputable licensed entity. The assessments must be performed by a certified general contractor who also holds either a certified plumbing license or an underground utility license. All contractors and technicians performing assessments must be certified by the NASSCO Pipeline Assessment Certification Program, Lateral Assessment Certification Program, or Manhole Assessment Certification Program to ensure quality and consistency with industry standards.

(b) Each service lateral within the utility system shall be inspected at least once every 7 years.

1. Inspections shall include a full assessment from the mainline sewer connection point to the edge of the building structure.

2. Utilities must develop and maintain a proactive schedule ensuring that 100 percent of all service laterals are inspected within each 7-year cycle.

3. CCTV lateral launch camera systems shall be used to perform all inspections.

4. All inspections must follow the NASSCO LACP protocols, including standardized coding and condition ratings.

(c)1. Each service lateral must be assigned a unique pipe identification or asset identification number which shall appear on all corresponding condition assessment documentation and inspection reports. This unique identifier must be compatible with and easily integrable into any existing geographic information system (GIS) or asset management database maintained by the utility system.

2. Each lateral shall receive a pipeline severity score indicating any observed or potential structural defects, infiltration, or inflow concerns.

(d) All inspection videos, reports, condition ratings, and supplementary data shall be recorded and retained in a secure, cloud-based platform.

1. Data shall be maintained for at least 2 full inspection cycles, a minimum of 14 years, ensuring availability for regulatory review and historical reference.

2. Condition assessment data must be maintained in a publicly accessible database for properties where defective, damaged, or deteriorated service laterals are identified. For each property, the database shall include, at a minimum:

a. The property address.

b. The date of inspection.

c. The pipeline severity score.

d. The general condition summary.

e. The unique pipe identification or asset identification

number.

(e) Any lateral with a pipe rating index score above 3.5 or a likelihood of failure score at or above 4 must be flagged for immediate consideration under the lateral monolithic repair program.

(f) Each utility system shall establish and maintain a lateral monolithic repair program.

1. The lateral monolithic repair program applies to any service lateral identified during the condition assessment program to have a pipe rating index score above 3.5 or a likelihood of failure score at or above 4. These laterals are deemed to have a detrimental effect on the utility system's capacity and are at high risk for infiltration and inflow events likely to contribute to sanitary sewer overflows, environmental damage, and public health threats.

2. Under the lateral monolithic repair program, the utility system must execute timely rehabilitation or replacement of the flagged service laterals using non-disruptive trenchless technology methods, thereby mitigating infiltration, restoring structural integrity, and minimizing community impact and costs. A complete seal at the main and lateral connection point must be ensured to create a monolithic system that prevents infiltration and extends asset lifecycle.

3. For any lateral placed into the lateral monolithic repair program, rehabilitation must be completed within 12

months from the date the issues are discovered. The rehabilitation work must be performed by a certified general contractor who also holds either a certified plumbing or underground utility license.

a. A two-way cleanout must be installed at the property and utility easement line to facilitate future inspections and minimize further disruptions.

b. A seamless, single-piece lateral connection seal must be installed at the main-lateral connection point to fully close the annular space. This seal may not rely on any additional mechanical means such as hydrophilic gaskets.

c. The service lateral itself must be rehabilitated to create a fully monolithic system from the mainline sewer to the structure, bonded to the host pipe for maximum structural durability and longevity. All materials used shall have a minimum life expectancy of 50 years and comply with American Society for Testing and Materials standards governing cured-in-place pipe in alignment with the Florida Building Code.

(4) ENFORCEMENT, COMPLIANCE, REPORTS.—

(a) The department or any successor agency shall implement and enforce this section.

(b) Utility systems shall submit annual compliance reports to the department detailing progress toward meeting inspection schedules, summary of condition findings, and any follow-up actions, particularly under the lateral monolithic repair

program, for at-risk laterals.

(5) PENALTIES.—

(a) Utility systems found to be noncompliant with any provision of this section may be subject to administrative fines, notices of violation, or other enforcement measures deemed appropriate by the department.

(b) Continued noncompliance may result in escalated penalties, including, but not limited to, suspension of certain operational permits and eligibility for state funding or grants.

(6) INCENTIVES.—The state may establish incentive programs, grants, or matching funds to support utility systems in developing or enhancing their condition assessment programs and monolithic repair efforts.

(7) FUNDING.—State or local funds allocated for environmental preservation or protection of water quality are permitted to be applied to this program in order to expedite sewer system improvements and reduce infiltration and inflow impacts.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.