A bill to be entitled

An act relating to water quality improvements; providing legislative findings; requiring the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to conduct a study of the prevalence and effects of lead in drinking water in certain public facilities; specifying the information that must be included in the study; requiring OPPAGA to consult with interested entities in conducting the study; requiring OPPAGA to submit the study to the Governor and Legislature by a specified date; providing for future repeal; amending s. 403.0673, F.S.; requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to consider and prioritize certain water quality improvement projects relating to special flood hazard areas; providing requirements for the Department of Health, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and water management districts relating to harmful algal blooms; requiring water management districts to submit a plan relating to the prevention and mitigation of the harmful effects of blue-green algal blooms to certain entities by a specified date; requiring specified entities to provide a schedule for implementing the plan; requiring the Department of Agriculture and Consumer

Services and the South Florida Water Management District to take specified actions to ensure nitrogen levels continue to drop in Lake Okeechobee; requiring the Department of Environmental Protection and the St. Johns River Water Management District to take specified actions relating to improving water quality in the Upper St. Johns River Basin; providing reporting requirements; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. (1) The Legislature finds that:

(a) The adverse health effects of lead exposure in children and adults are well documented and no safe blood-lead level in children has been identified.

(b) Lead accumulates in the body and can be ingested from various sources, including water sources used for drinking, food preparation, or cooking.

(c) All sources of lead should be controlled or eliminated to prevent lead poisoning.

(2) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) shall conduct a study of the prevalence and effects of lead in drinking water in all public facilities that receive state funding. OPPAGA may contract with an outside vendor to conduct the study subject to legislative appropriation

or available resources.

(3) The study must include all of the following information:

(a) The amount of lead piping at each public facility that receives state funding.

(b) The effects of lead on the health, growth, and mental development of persons who use and are employed at public facilities that receive state funding.

(c) The financial impact on this state due to the effects of lead on the health, growth, and mental development of persons who use and are employed at public facilities that receive state funding.

(d) The cost to this state to maintain the lead pipes currently used by public facilities that receive state funding, including pipes that use lead in solder.

(e) The cost for this state to provide point-of-use water filters certified by the American National Standards Institute to public facilities that receive state funding to reduce lead levels in the water.

(4) In conducting the study, OPPAGA shall consult with any interested entities.

(5) OPPAGA shall submit the study to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2026.

(6) This act is repealed on June 30, 2026, unless reviewed

and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

Section 2. Subsection (3) of section 403.0673, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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

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

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

(b) Demonstrate project readiness;

(c) Are cost-effective;

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

(e) Have multiyear project implementation schedules with previous state commitment and involvement in the project, considering previously funded phases, the total amount of previous state funding, and previous partial appropriations for the proposed project;

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

(g) Were determined eligible in a previous application cycle and were able to demonstrate project readiness but were

not awarded a grant; or

(h) Are located in any special flood hazard area defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

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

Section 3. Harmful algal blooms.—

(1) The Department of Health shall develop:

(a) A training program for health care professionals that improves the diagnosis, treatment, and reporting of harmful algal bloom-related illnesses. The training program must contain separate components to address red tide and blue-green algae.

(b) Guidelines, protocols, and related training programs to protect the health of persons who regularly work near harmful algal blooms.

(2) The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission shall consider the work of the Florida Red Tide Mitigation and Technology Development Initiative to develop a model to be used in creating a red tide early warning system. The model must be deployed by July 1, 2027.

(3)(a) By July 1, 2027, the water management districts shall collaboratively develop, based on the Blue-Green Algae Task Force Consensus Document #1, dated October 11, 2019, a comprehensive plan to prevent and mitigate the harmful effects

of blue-green algal blooms. The plan must be submitted to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2027.

(b) Once developed, each water management district and each county and municipality must provide a schedule for implementing the plan within their jurisdictions. The schedule must include a completion timeline and anticipated fiscal impacts. A county or municipality that determines that there are no water bodies within its jurisdiction which may be impacted by a blue-green algal outbreak must provide reasons for such determination in a report to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission by December 1, 2027.

Section 4. Lake Okeechobee; Upper St. Johns River Basin.—

(1)(a) To protect the northern estuaries, including the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the South Florida Water Management District must continue to work with agricultural interests to monitor their best management practices (BMPs) to ensure that total nitrogen levels continue to drop in Lake Okeechobee. The BMPs north of the lake and the total maximum daily load (TMDL) for the lake must be reevaluated for accuracy and effectiveness every 12 months, beginning July 1, 2026, and may be revised to achieve greater environmental benefit and improved water quality.

(b) The department and the water management district must jointly provide a report on any revisions made to the BMPs or the TMDL to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives every 24 months, beginning July 1, 2028.

(2)(a) The Department of Environmental Protection and the St. Johns River Water Management District must ensure that the TMDLs and basin management action plans for the Upper St. Johns River Basin are monitored and expeditiously implemented. The TMDLs and basin management action plans must be reevaluated for accuracy and effectiveness every 12 months, beginning July 1, 2026, and may be revised to achieve greater environmental benefit and improved water quality.

(b) The department and the water management district must jointly submit a report on any revisions to the TMDLs or basin management action plans to the Governor, the Commissioner of Agriculture, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives every 24 months, beginning July 1, 2028.

Section 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.