

By Senator Berman

26-01854-25

20251646\_\_

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to water quality improvements;  
3       providing legislative findings; requiring the Office  
4       of Program Policy Analysis and Government  
5       Accountability (OPPAGA) to conduct a study of the  
6       prevalence and effects of lead in drinking water in  
7       certain public facilities; specifying the information  
8       that must be included in the study; requiring OPPAGA  
9       to consult with interested entities in conducting the  
10      study; requiring OPPAGA to submit the study to the  
11      Governor and Legislature by a specified date;  
12      providing for future repeal; amending s. 403.0673,  
13      F.S.; requiring the Department of Environmental  
14      Protection to consider and prioritize certain water  
15      quality improvement projects relating to special flood  
16      hazard areas; providing requirements for the  
17      Department of Health, the Fish and Wildlife  
18      Conservation Commission, and water management  
19      districts relating to harmful algal blooms; requiring  
20      water management districts to submit a plan relating  
21      to the prevention and mitigation of the harmful  
22      effects of blue-green algal blooms to certain entities  
23      by a specified date; requiring specified entities to  
24      provide a schedule for implementing the plan;  
25      requiring the Department of Agriculture and Consumer  
26      Services and the South Florida Water Management  
27      District to take specified actions to ensure nitrogen  
28      levels continue to drop in Lake Okeechobee; requiring  
29      the Department of Environmental Protection and the St.

26-01854-25

20251646\_\_

30 Johns River Water Management District to take  
31 specified actions relating to improving water quality  
32 in the Upper St. Johns River Basin; providing  
33 reporting requirements; providing an effective date.  
34

35 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
36

37 Section 1. (1) The Legislature finds that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26-01854-25

20251646\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

75       (6) This section is repealed on June 30, 2026, unless  
76 reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the  
77 Legislature.

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

80       403.0673 Water quality improvement grant program.—A grant  
81 program is established within the Department of Environmental  
82 Protection to address wastewater, stormwater, and agricultural  
83 sources of nutrient loading to surface water or groundwater.

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

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

26-01854-25

20251646\_\_

- 88 (b) Demonstrate project readiness;
- 89 (c) Are cost-effective;
- 90 (d) Have a cost share identified by the applicant, except
- 91 for rural areas of opportunity;
- 92 (e) Have multiyear project implementation schedules with
- 93 previous state commitment and involvement in the project,
- 94 considering previously funded phases, the total amount of
- 95 previous state funding, and previous partial appropriations for
- 96 the proposed project;
- 97 (f) Are in a location where reductions are needed most to
- 98 attain the water quality standards of a waterbody not attaining
- 99 nutrient or nutrient-related standards; ~~or~~
- 100 (g) Were determined eligible in a previous application
- 101 cycle and were able to demonstrate project readiness but were
- 102 not awarded a grant; or
- 103 (h) Are located in any special flood hazard area defined by
- 104 the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

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

109 Section 3. Harmful algal blooms.-

110 (1) The Department of Health shall develop:

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

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

26-01854-25

20251646\_\_

117 algal blooms.

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

123 (3) (a) By July 1, 2027, the water management districts  
124 shall collaboratively develop, based on the Blue-Green Algae  
125 Task Force Consensus Document #1, dated October 11, 2019, a  
126 comprehensive plan to prevent and mitigate the harmful effects  
127 of blue-green algal blooms. The plan must be submitted to the  
128 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
129 Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the  
130 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2027.

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

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

141 (1) (a) To protect the northern estuaries, including the  
142 Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, the Department of  
143 Agriculture and Consumer Services and the South Florida Water  
144 Management District must continue to work with agricultural  
145 interests to monitor their best management practices (BMPs) to

26-01854-25

20251646\_\_

146 ensure that total nitrogen levels continue to drop in Lake  
147 Okeechobee. The BMPs north of the lake and the total maximum  
148 daily load (TMDL) for the lake must be reevaluated for accuracy  
149 and effectiveness every 12 months, beginning July 1, 2026, and  
150 may be revised to achieve greater environmental benefit and  
151 improved water quality.

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

158 (2) (a) The Department of Environmental Protection and the  
159 St. Johns River Water Management District must ensure that the  
160 TMDLs and basin management action plans for the Upper St. Johns  
161 River Basin are monitored and expeditiously implemented. The  
162 TMDLs and basin management action plans must be reevaluated for  
163 accuracy and effectiveness every 12 months, beginning July 1,  
164 2026, and may be revised to achieve greater environmental  
165 benefit and improved water quality.

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

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