

HB 1161

2026

A bill to be entitled  
An act relating to the Big Cypress Basin; amending s. 373.0693, F.S.; revising the membership of the Big Cypress Basin governing board; requiring the South Florida Water Management District to revise the boundaries of the Big Cypress Basin based on a specified study at a specified time; removing obsolete language; amending s. 373.503, F.S.; requiring the South Florida Water Management District to ensure that the distribution of basin ad valorem taxes collected within the Big Cypress Basin be used for projects and flood control operations and maintenance within the counties in which they were collected; reenacting s. 373.0697, F.S., relating to basin taxes, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 373.503, F.S., in a reference thereto; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (9) of section 373.0693, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

373.0693 Basins; basin boards.—

(9) At 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 1976, a portion of the Big Cypress Basin of the Ridge and Lower Gulf Coast District which is being annexed into the South Florida Water Management

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26 District by change of boundaries pursuant to chapter 76-243,  
27 Laws of Florida, shall be formed into a subdistrict or basin of  
28 the South Florida Water Management District. Such portion shall  
29 be designated as the Big Cypress Basin. ~~On or before December~~  
30 ~~31, 1976,~~ The Governor shall appoint ~~six not fewer than five~~  
31 persons from Collier County and two persons from Lee County who  
32 reside within the Big Cypress Basin residing in the area to  
33 serve as members of the governing board of the basin, effective  
34 ~~at the time of transfer and~~ subject to confirmation by the  
35 Senate as provided in subsection (4).

36 (a) The initial boundaries of the Big Cypress Basin shall  
37 be established by resolution of the governing board of Central  
38 and Southern Florida Flood Control District, after notice and  
39 hearing, and generally shall encompass the Big Cypress Swamp and  
40 southwestern coastal area hydrologic cataloging unit, as  
41 indicated on River Basin and Hydrologic Unit Map of Florida—  
42 1975, Florida Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Geology  
43 Map Series No. 72.

44 (b) At 11:59 p.m. on July 1, 2026, the governing board of  
45 the South Florida Water Management District shall establish the  
46 boundary of the Big Cypress Basin as the scientific boundary  
47 recommended in the Big Cypress Basin Boundary Delineation study  
48 that the district presented to the Legislature on January 12,  
49 2021, except that the new basin boundary may include only  
50 counties that have at least 25 percent of their jurisdictions

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51 delineated within the boundary.

52 ~~(b) If the governing board shall fail to establish the~~  
53 ~~initial boundaries on or before December 31, 1976, the initial~~  
54 ~~boundaries shall be the same boundaries as described for the Big~~  
55 ~~Cypress Basin of the Ridge and Lower Gulf Coast District.~~

56 ~~(e) The governing board of the South Florida Water~~  
57 ~~Management District subsequently may change the boundaries of~~  
58 ~~the basin, but may not abolish the basin.~~

59 **Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section**  
60 **373.503, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

61 373.503 Manner of taxation.—

62 (3) The districts may levy ad valorem taxes on property  
63 within the district solely for the purposes of this chapter and  
64 of chapter 25270, 1949, Laws of Florida, as amended, and chapter  
65 61-691, Laws of Florida, as amended. If appropriate, taxes  
66 levied by each governing board may be separated by the governing  
67 board into a millage necessary for the purposes of the district  
68 and a millage necessary for financing basin functions specified  
69 in s. 373.0695.

70 ~~(b) The apportionment in~~ The South Florida Water  
71 Management District shall ensure that:

72 1. The apportionment within the district is be a maximum  
73 of 40 percent for district purposes and a maximum of 60 percent  
74 for basin purposes; and

75 2. The basin ad valorem taxes levied within the counties

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76   that comprise the Big Cypress Basin are used for projects and  
77   flood control operations and maintenance within the counties in  
78   which such taxes were collected, respectively.

79   **Section 3. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment**  
80   **made by this act to section 373.503, Florida Statutes, in a**  
81   **reference thereto, section 373.0697, Florida Statutes, is**  
82   **reenacted to read:**

83       373.0697 Basin taxes.—The respective basins may, pursuant  
84    to s. 9(b), Art. VII of the State Constitution, by resolution  
85    request the governing board of the district to levy ad valorem  
86    taxes within such basin. Upon receipt of such request, a basin  
87    tax levy shall be made by the governing board of the district to  
88    finance basin functions enumerated in s. 373.0695,  
89    notwithstanding the provisions of any other general or special  
90    law to the contrary, and subject to the provisions of s.  
91    373.503(3).

92       (1) The amount of money to be raised by said tax levy  
93    shall be determined by the adoption of an annual budget by the  
94    district board of governors, and the average millage for the  
95    basin shall be that amount required to raise the amount called  
96    for by the annual budget when applied to the total assessment of  
97    the basin as determined for county taxing purposes. However, no  
98    such tax shall be levied within the basin unless and until the  
99    annual budget and required tax levy shall have been approved by  
100    formal action of the basin board, and no county in the district

101 shall be taxed under this provision at a rate to exceed 1 mill.

102 (2) The taxes provided for in this section shall be  
103 extended by the county property appraiser on the county tax roll  
104 in each county within, or partly within, the basin and shall be  
105 collected by the tax collector in the same manner and time as  
106 county taxes, and the proceeds therefrom paid to the district  
107 for basin purposes. Said taxes shall be a lien, until paid, on  
108 the property against which assessed and enforceable in like  
109 manner as county taxes. The property appraisers, tax collectors,  
110 and clerks of the circuit court of the respective counties shall  
111 be entitled to compensation for services performed in connection  
112 with such taxes at the same rates as apply to county taxes.

113 (3) It is hereby determined that the taxes authorized by  
114 this subsection are in proportion to the benefits to be derived  
115 by the several parcels of real estate within the basin from the  
116 works authorized herein.

117 **Section 4.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.