

HB 4081

2026

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to the Eastpoint Water and Sewer
District, Franklin County; amending chapter 2023-7,
Laws of Florida; modifying the boundaries of the
district to include additional lands; providing
additional powers of the board; providing effective
dates.

WHEREAS, Apalachicola Bay is one of the most productive estuarine systems in the Northern Hemisphere, boasting a rich and diverse ecosystem that supports a wide array of habitats and wildlife, and

WHEREAS, Apalachicola Bay serves as a significant nursery ground for the Gulf of America, nurturing various species of fish and shellfish, and

WHEREAS, over 95 percent of commercially harvested species and 85 percent of recreationally harvested species in the open Gulf of America spend a portion of their life cycle in estuarine waters like Apalachicola Bay, and

WHEREAS, Apalachicola Bay supports a local fishing industry worth \$14-16 million annually, which in turn directly supports up to 85 percent of the local population, and

WHEREAS, untreated or inadequately treated wastewater from old, failing, poorly maintained or overloaded septic systems on St. George Island is causing excessive nutrients, disease-

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26 carrying pathogens, and chemical contaminants to be discharged
27 into Apalachicola Bay, threatening the habitats, wildlife, and
28 industry that the bay supports, and

29 WHEREAS, the private water utility servicing St. George
30 Island has expressed a desire to transfer ownership of its
31 assets and liability to the Eastpoint Water and Sewer District,
32 and

33 WHEREAS, Florida courts have held that the expansion of the
34 boundaries of an independent special district with voter-
35 approved ad valorem tax millage does not create a new district
36 requiring voter referendum before any ad valorem tax millage is
37 levied, NOW, THEREFORE,

38

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

40

41 **Section 1. Section 2 of section 2 of chapter 2023-7, Laws
42 of Florida, is amended, and subsection (19) is added to section
43 8 of that section, to read:**

44 Section 2. Boundaries.—The Eastpoint Water and Sewer
45 District shall include all that portion of Eastpoint in said
46 county described as follows:

47

48 All of Sections 15, 19, 20, 21, 23 and Section 30 and
49 all of Fractional Sections 29, 31, and 32 in Township
50 8 South, Range 6 West; All of Section 28 and

51 Fractional Sections 25 and 36 in Township 8 South,
52 Range 7 West; All of Fractional Section 1 in Township
53 9 South, Range 7 West; and all of Sections 22 and 29
54 and Fractional Section 6 in Township 9 South, Range 6
55 West.

56

57 Section 8. Powers of board.—The board may:

58 (19) Inspect septic tanks within the district to ensure
59 the septic tanks are being operated in compliance with
60 applicable permits and provide reasonable penalties for
61 violations.

62

63 **Section 2. Effective October 1 of the year after the date**
64 **the Eastpoint Water and Sewer District acquires the water**
65 **utility serving St. George Island as of October 1, 2026, section**
66 **2 of section 2 of chapter 2023-7, Laws of Florida, as amended by**
67 **section 1 of this act, is amended to read:**

68 Section 2. Boundaries.—The Eastpoint Water and Sewer
69 District shall include all that portion of Eastpoint in said
70 county described as follows:

71

72 All of Sections 15, 19, 20, 21, 23 and 30 and all of
73 Fractional Sections 29, 31, and 32 in Township 8
74 South, Range 6 West; All of Section 28 and Fractional
75 Sections 25 and 36 in Township 8 South, Range 7 West;

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76 All of Fractional Section 1 in Township 9 South, Range
77 7 West; and all of Sections 22 and 29 and Fractional
78 Section 6 in Township 9 South, Range 6 West.

80 All of St. George Island.

83 **Section 3.** Except as otherwise expressly provided in this
84 act, this act shall take effect October 1, 2026.