

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2012 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Community Affairs

CS/HB 377 — Miami-Dade County Lake Belt Mitigation Plan

by Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee; and Rep. Nunez and others (CS/CS/SB 182 by Budget Subcommittee on General Government Appropriations; Community Affairs Committee; and Senators Garcia, Margolis, Braynon, Diaz de la Portilla, and Flores)

Limestone operations in the Miami-Dade County Lake Belt are guided by the Lake Belt Mitigation Plan. Under the plan provided in current law, the Lake Belt limestone companies pay a special mitigation fee of 45 cents for each ton of limerock and sand sold. The proceeds of the mitigation fee must be used to conduct mitigation activities that are appropriate to offset the loss of the value and functions of wetlands as a result of mining activities and must be used in a manner consistent with the recommendations contained in the reports submitted to the Legislature by the Miami-Dade County Lake Belt Mitigation Plan Implementation Committee and adopted under s. 373.4149, F.S. The fee is collected by the Department of Revenue and transferred to the South Florida Water Management District's Lake Belt Mitigation Trust Fund.

The Lake Belt limestone companies also pay a water treatment plant upgrade fee of 15 cents per ton, to be used to upgrade a water treatment plant that treats water coming from the Northwest Wellfield in Miami-Dade County. The fee is collected by the Department of Revenue and transferred to a trust fund established by Miami-Dade County.

The bill expands the authorized uses of the proceeds of the water treatment plant upgrade fee by allowing the proceeds of the fee to be used to pay for seepage mitigation projects, including groundwater and surface water management structures designed to improve wetland habitat and approved by the Lake Belt Mitigation Committee.

Beginning July 1, 2012, the proceeds of the water treatment plant upgrade fee will be deposited into the Lake Belt Mitigation Trust Fund to pay for seepage mitigation projects. The money will be transferred until:

- \$20 million is placed in the trust fund, or
- Pathogen sampling demonstrates that the water in any quarry lake in the vicinity of the Northwest Wellfield would be classified as being in Bin 2 or higher.

Once either of these qualifications is triggered, the proceeds would again be transferred to a trust fund established by Miami-Dade County for the purpose of upgrading a water treatment plant that treats water coming from the Northwest Wellfield.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 116-0