

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2021 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Appropriations

SB 2516 — Water Storage North of Lake Okeechobee
by Appropriations

SB 2516 conforms statutes to the funding decisions related to water storage north of Lake Okeechobee in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. The bill requires the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), to expedite implementation of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP). The LOWRP is a project in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan which provides water storage north of Lake Okeechobee.

The bill requires the SFWMD to:

- Request that the USACE seek expedited congressional approval of the LOWRP.
- Require the execution of a project partnership agreement with the USACE immediately following approval.
- Expedite implementation of the aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) Science Plan developed by the SFWMD and the USACE.
- Expedite implementation of the watershed ASR feature of the LOWRP.
- Pursue expeditious implementation of the LOWRP wetland restoration features.
- Submit, by November 1, 2021, a report to the Legislature describing the SFWMD's compliance with the bill (including steps taken, plans for ongoing compliance, and specified updates related to the LOWRP implementation).

SB 2516 amends s. 375.041, F.S., to provide a \$50 million annual appropriation from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund to the SFWMD for the LOWRP.

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

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 118-0