

Committee on Environmental Preservation And Conservation

CS/CS/HB 573 — Water Protection and Sustainability

by Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee; Natural Resources and Public Lands Subcommittee; and Rep. Burton and others (CS/SB 928 by Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee and Senators Stargel and Mayfield)

The bill (Chapter 2017-111, L.O.F.) creates the “Heartland Headwaters Protection and Sustainability Act.” The bill contains legislative findings and intent regarding the significance of, and protections for, water resources in the Green Swamp Area of central Florida.

The bill requires the Polk County Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC), in coordination with all of its member county and municipal governments, to prepare a comprehensive annual report on water resource projects identified for state funding consideration within its members’ jurisdictions. The report must include:

- A list of projects, identified by the PRWC for state funding consideration for each of the following categories:
 - Drinking water supply;
 - Wastewater;
 - Stormwater and flood control;
 - Environmental restoration; and
 - Conservation.A project may be listed in more than one category.
- A priority ranking for each listed project that will be ready to proceed in the upcoming fiscal year identified by the project categories.
- The estimated cost of each listed project.
- The estimated completion date of each listed project.
- The source and amount of financial assistance to be provided by the PRWC, the member county or municipal governments, or other entity for each listed project.

The bill requires the PRWC to submit its annual report beginning December 1, 2017 to the Governor, the Legislature, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and appropriate water management districts (WMDs). The bill also requires the PRWC to coordinate with appropriate WMDs on the inclusion in consolidated WMD annual reports of a status report on projects receiving priority state funding.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect on July 1, 2017.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0