

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: CS/SB 574

SPONSOR: Senator Brown-Waite

SUBJECT: Establishing Minimum Flows and Levels for Springs

DATE: February 27, 2002      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Branning</u>	<u>Voigt</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>Favorable/CS</u>
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

## I. Summary:

This bill requires that by January 1, 2003, each water management district's priority list and schedule for establishing minimum flows and levels shall include all first magnitude springs and all second magnitude springs within state or federally owned lands purchased for conservation purposes. Springs within the Suwannee River Water Management District need not be included on the priority list if the district submits a report to the Department of Environmental Protection demonstrating that adverse impacts are not now occurring nor are reasonably expected to occur from consumptive uses during the next 20 years.

This bill amends s. 373.042, F.S.

## II. Present Situation:

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) created the Florida Springs Task Force to recommend strategies for the protection and restoration of Florida Springs. The Task Force produced a report in November, 2000, that contains an abundance of information about springs in Florida.

Geologists estimate that there are nearly 600 springs in the State of Florida. Springs are classified by rate of discharge. First magnitude springs produce the greatest amount of water.

<u>Magnitude</u>	<u>Average Flow (Discharge)*</u>				
1	100 cfs or more	(64.6mgd or more)			
2	10 to 100 cfs	(6.46 to 64.6 mgd)	Cfs	=	cubic feet per second
3	1 to 10 cfs	(0.646 to 6.46 mgd)	Mgd	=	million gallons per day
4	100 gpm to 1 cfs	(448 gpm)	Gpm	=	gallons per minute
5	10 to 100 gpm		pint/min	=	pints per minute

6	1 to 10 gpm
7	1 pint to 1 gpm
8	Less than 1 pint/min

\*From *Geological Bulletin No. 31, revised, Springs of Florida, Florida Geological Survey, 1977*

Florida's springs have provided a major contribution to the state's economy for over a century. The 12 state parks named for springs collect over \$7 million in revenue annually. Available information indicates that private parks featuring springs also contribute millions of dollars to Florida's economy each year, making springs important contributors to Florida's tourist economy.

Between 1950 and 1990, Florida's human population more than quadrupled. With population growth has come an unavoidable increase in water use, as well as extensive land use changes. During the twentieth century, a number of once-popular springs, such as Kissengen Springs in Polk County, stopped flowing, and discharge measurements indicate flow reductions in other springs.

Springs have supplied drinking water to Floridians for thousands of years. The groundwater that flows from most of Florida's springs originates from the same Floridan Aquifer that is tapped for most municipal supplies and private wells in the state. Also, the bottled water industry is inspiring a renewed interest in spring water. The quantity and quality of spring discharge are vulnerable to the effects of activities that occur within spring recharge basins. The nature and magnitude of the threats varies according to land use practices and geology within each spring recharge basin.

Section 373.223, F.S., establishes conditions for a permit for consumptive use of water to assure that such use is not harmful to the water resources of the area. Section 373.042, F.S., directs governing boards of water management districts or the DEP to establish:

- Minimum flow for all surface water courses in the area. The minimum flow for a given watercourse shall be the limit at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area.
- Minimum water level. The minimum water level will be the level of groundwater in an aquifer and the level of surface water at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources of the area.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill amends s. 373.042, F.S., to require that by January 1, 2003, each water management district's priority list and schedule for establishing minimum flows and levels shall include all first magnitude springs, and all second magnitude springs within state or federally-owned lands purchased for conservation purposes. The specific schedule for establishment of spring minimum flows and levels shall be commensurate with the existing or potential threat to spring flow from consumptive uses. Springs within the Suwannee River Water Management District, or second magnitude springs in other areas of the state, need not be included on the priority list if the water

management district submits a report to the Department of Environmental Protection demonstrating that adverse impacts are not now occurring nor are reasonably expected to occur from consumptive uses during the next 20 years.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

No significant impact.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Amendments:**

None.