

By Senator Gibson

9-01547B-16

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to water oversight and planning;
3 establishing the Water Oversight and Planning Board to
4 address water issues in the state; providing
5 membership and terms; providing meeting requirements;
6 requiring the Department of Environmental Protection
7 to provide staff to the board; providing reimbursement
8 for per diem and travel expenses; providing board
9 duties; requiring the board to submit its long-range
10 plans to the department, each water management
11 district, the Governor, and the Legislature; requiring
12 the board to provide its findings and recommendations
13 to the Governor and the Legislature; providing an
14 effective date.

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

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18 Section 1. (1) The Water Oversight and Planning Board is
19 established as the statewide oversight board for issues
20 affecting and impacting water supply and water supply planning,
21 water quality restoration and protection, flood protection and
22 flood plain management, and natural systems protection and
23 restoration.

24 (2) The Water Oversight and Planning Board shall consist of
25 15 members as follows:

26 (a) Two members appointed by the Governor.

27 (b) One representative from the Department of Agriculture
28 and Consumer Services.

29 (c) One representative from the Department of Environmental
30 Protection.

31 (d) One representative from Sierra Club Florida.

32 (e) One representative from the Florida Home Builders

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33 Association.

34 (f) One representative from the Florida Chamber of
35 Commerce.

36 (g) One representative from Associated Industries of
37 Florida.

38 (h) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by
39 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

40 (i) One member of the Senate appointed by the President of
41 the Senate.

42 (j) One representative from each of the five water
43 management districts.

44 (3) (a) The board shall meet at least quarterly, and each
45 meeting within any one year shall be held in a different
46 location in the state. Additional meetings may be held upon the
47 call of the chair. A majority of the members of the board
48 constitutes a quorum. Board meetings may be conducted by
49 conference call, teleconferencing, or similar technology.

50 (b) Members of the board shall serve for a term of 4 years.
51 A vacancy occurring during a member's term shall be filled in
52 the same manner as the initial appointment. The board shall be
53 chaired by a member chosen by majority vote.

54 (c) The Department of Environmental Protection shall
55 provide the board with staff necessary to assist the board in
56 the performance of its duties.

57 (d) Members of the board shall serve without compensation
58 but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and travel
59 expenses pursuant to s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.

60 Reimbursements made pursuant to this paragraph may be paid from
61 appropriations provided to the Department of Environmental

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62 Protection by the Legislature in the General Appropriations Act.

63 (4) Recognizing that water is an essential public resource
64 that benefits the entire state and must be carefully managed to
65 ensure its sustainability, the Water Oversight and Planning
66 Board shall use the best science available to:

67 (a) Review and monitor district regional water supply plans
68 developed under s. 373.709, Florida Statutes.

69 (b) Use data provided by the water management districts and
70 others with peer-reviewed scientific data to:

71 1. Develop 5-year, 10-year, and 20-year forecasting plans
72 to ensure the state has the appropriate quantities and quality
73 of water at the appropriate times of the year for people,
74 agriculture, and the protection and restoration of natural
75 systems.

76 2. Identify and inventory existing sources of potable
77 water.

78 3. Identify new sources of water for potable uses,
79 agricultural uses, industrial uses, and protection and
80 restoration of natural systems.

81 4. Identify the largest consumers of water by water
82 management district and overall statewide.

83 (c) Consolidate and compile existing water data supplied by
84 the water management districts and others with peer-reviewed
85 scientific data into a standardized format for creation of an
86 electronic water data center. The water data center shall be
87 housed within the Florida Geological Survey and be available to
88 the public.

89 (d) Building upon the reports previously submitted by the
90 Department of Environmental Protection, investigate techniques,

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91 financial incentives, and regulatory mechanisms to promote or
92 require water conservation.

93 (e) Working with the Department of Education, investigate
94 ways to promote water conservation education and practices.

95 (f) Promote reuse of reclaimed water and treated wastewater
96 for nonpotable purposes, such as landscape irrigation and
97 farming, as appropriate.

98 (g) Review recommendations contained in the regional water
99 supply plans developed under s. 373.709, Florida Statutes.

100 (h) Assess mechanisms to ensure water management districts
101 expedite the protection and restoration of natural systems,
102 including by expanded use of reservations of water under s.
103 373.223(4), Florida Statutes.

104 (i) Investigate mechanisms to incentivize the construction
105 of technologies such as desalination and reuse to produce new
106 sources of potable water.

107 (j) Review the impact of underground activity, including
108 drilling, hydraulic fracturing, chemical injection, mining, and
109 stormwater injection, that may impact or pollute the aquifer,
110 surface waters, or natural systems.

111 (k) Randomly sample dredging projects from permits issued
112 by the water management districts to assess the impacts of
113 dredging activities on natural systems.

114 (l) With input from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
115 Commission, develop recommendations to protect natural systems,
116 including lakes, springs, wetlands, marshes, wildlife habitats,
117 recreational sites, and streams.

118 (m) Make recommendations for improved management of beaches
119 and coastal systems, Everglades restoration, wetland and

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120 submerged land protection, and techniques for beach
121 renourishment.

122 (5) By September 1 annually, the board shall submit its
123 long-range plans to the Department of Environmental Protection,
124 each of the water management districts, the Governor, the
125 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
126 Representatives.

127 (6) Every other year, beginning on September 1, 2017, the
128 board shall submit its findings and recommendations to the
129 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
130 House of Representatives.

131 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.