

By Senator Gibson

6-01134-17

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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 Advisory  
4       Council to address water issues in the state;  
5       providing membership and terms; providing meeting  
6       requirements; requiring the Department of  
7       Environmental Protection to provide staff to the  
8       council; providing reimbursement for certain expenses;  
9       providing council duties; requiring interdepartmental  
10      investigation with the Department of Education to  
11      promote water conservation education and practices;  
12      requiring the council to annually submit its long-  
13      range plans to the department, each water management  
14      district, the Governor, and the Legislature; requiring  
15      the council to provide its findings and  
16      recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature  
17      biennially; providing an effective date.

18  
19 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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21       Section 1. (1) The Water Oversight and Planning Advisory  
22 Council, an advisory council as defined in s. 20.03, is  
23 established adjunct to the Department of Environmental  
24 Protection as the statewide oversight council for issues  
25 impacting water supply and water supply planning, water quality  
26 restoration and protection, flood protection and flood plain  
27 management, and natural systems protection and restoration.

28       (2) The Water Oversight and Planning Council shall consist  
29 of 15 members as follows:

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30 (a) Two members appointed by the Governor.

31 (b) One representative from the Department of Agriculture  
32 and Consumer Services appointed by the Commissioner of  
33 Agriculture.

34 (c) One representative from the Department of Environmental  
35 Protection appointed by the Secretary of Environmental  
36 Protection.

37 (d) One representative from Sierra Club Florida appointed  
38 by the club.

39 (e) One representative from the Florida Home Builders  
40 Association appointed by the association.

41 (f) One representative from the Florida Chamber of Commerce  
42 appointed by the chamber.

43 (g) One representative from Associated Industries of  
44 Florida appointed by the association.

45 (h) One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
46 Representatives.

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

48 (j) One representative from each of the five water  
49 management districts appointed by each district's executive  
50 director.

51 (3) (a) The council shall meet at least quarterly, and each  
52 meeting within any one year must be held in a different location  
53 in the state. Additional meetings may be held upon the call of  
54 the chair. A majority of the members of the council constitutes  
55 a quorum. Council meetings may be conducted by conference call,  
56 teleconferencing, or similar technology.

57 (b) Members of the council shall serve for a term of 4  
58 years. A vacancy occurring during a member's term must be filled

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59 in the same manner as the initial appointment. The council shall  
60 be chaired by a member chosen by majority vote.

61 (c) The Department of Environmental Protection shall  
62 provide the council with staff necessary to assist the council  
63 in the performance of its duties.

64 (d) Members of the council shall serve without compensation  
65 but are entitled to reimbursement of expenses as provided in s.  
66 112.061. Reimbursements made pursuant to this paragraph may be  
67 paid from appropriations provided to the Department of  
68 Environmental Protection by the Legislature in the General  
69 Appropriations Act.

70 (4) Recognizing that water is an essential public resource  
71 that benefits the entire state and must be carefully managed to  
72 ensure its sustainability, the Water Oversight and Planning  
73 Council shall use the best science available to:

74 (a) Review and monitor regional water supply plans  
75 developed by the water management districts under s. 373.709,  
76 Florida Statutes.

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

79 1. Recommend 5-year, 10-year, and 20-year forecasting plans  
80 to ensure the state has the appropriate quantities and quality  
81 of water at the appropriate times of the year for people,  
82 agriculture, and the protection and restoration of natural  
83 systems.

84 2. Identify and inventory existing sources of potable  
85 water.

86 3. Identify new sources of water for potable uses,  
87 agricultural uses, industrial uses, and protection and

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88 restoration of natural systems.

89 4. Identify the largest consumers of water by water  
90 management district and overall statewide.

91 (c) Consolidate and compile existing water data supplied by  
92 the water management districts and others with peer-reviewed  
93 scientific data into a standardized format for creation of an  
94 electronic water data center. The water data center shall be  
95 housed within the Florida Geological Survey and be available to  
96 the public.

97 (d) Building upon the reports previously submitted by the  
98 Department of Environmental Protection, investigate techniques,  
99 financial incentives, and regulatory mechanisms to promote or  
100 require water conservation.

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

103 (f) Promote reuse of reclaimed water and treated wastewater  
104 for nonpotable purposes, such as landscape irrigation and  
105 farming, as appropriate.

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

108 (h) Assess mechanisms to ensure water management districts  
109 expedite the protection and restoration of natural systems,  
110 including by expanded use of reservations of water under s.  
111 373.223(4), Florida Statutes.

112 (i) Investigate mechanisms to incentivize the construction  
113 of technologies, such as desalination and reuse to produce new  
114 sources of potable water.

115 (j) Review the impact of underground activity, including  
116 drilling, hydraulic fracturing, chemical injection, mining, and

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117 stormwater injection, which may impact or pollute the state's  
118 aquifers, surface waters, or natural systems.

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

122 (l) With input from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation  
123 Commission, develop recommendations to protect natural systems,  
124 including lakes, springs, wetlands, marshes, wildlife habitats,  
125 recreational sites, and streams.

126 (m) Make recommendations for improved management of beaches  
127 and coastal systems, Everglades restoration, wetland and  
128 submerged land protection, and techniques for beach  
129 renourishment.

130 (5) By September 1 of each year, the council shall submit  
131 its long-range plans developed pursuant to sub-subparagraph  
132 (4) (b) 1. to the Department of Environmental Protection, each of  
133 the water management districts, the Governor, the President of  
134 the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

135 (6) Every other year, beginning on September 1, 2018, the  
136 council shall submit its findings and recommendations to the  
137 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
138 House of Representatives.

139 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.