

By the Committee on Fiscal Policy; and Senator Hutson

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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to funding for environmental resource  
3       management; creating s. 380.095, F.S.; providing  
4       legislative findings and intent; requiring the  
5       Department of Revenue to deposit into the Indian  
6       Gaming Revenue Trust Fund within the Department of  
7       Financial Services a specified percentage of the  
8       revenue share payments received under the gaming  
9       compact between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the  
10      State of Florida; providing requirements for the  
11      distribution of such funds; creating s. 260.0145,  
12      F.S.; creating the Local Trail Management Grant  
13      Program within the Department of Environmental  
14      Protection for a specified purpose; providing for the  
15      administration and prioritization of awards;  
16      specifying the authorized and prohibited uses of grant  
17      funds; requiring the department to submit an annual  
18      report to the Governor and the Legislature by a  
19      specified date; providing requirements for the report;  
20      amending s. 259.1055, F.S.; authorizing the Fish and  
21      Wildlife Conservation Commission to enter into  
22      voluntary agreements with private landowners for  
23      environmental services within the Florida wildlife  
24      corridor; providing requirements for such agreements;  
25      authorizing the use of land management funds;  
26      requiring the Land Management Uniform Accounting  
27      Council to recommend the efficient and effective use  
28      of certain funds available to state agencies for land  
29      management activities; providing requirements for such

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30 recommendations; requiring the council to adopt and  
31 submit its initial recommendation to the Executive  
32 Office of the Governor and the Legislature by a  
33 specified date; requiring biennial updates; amending  
34 s. 403.0673, F.S.; revising the projects the  
35 department is required to prioritize within the water  
36 quality improvement grant program; revising the  
37 components required for the grant program's annual  
38 report; providing appropriations; requiring the  
39 department to coordinate with the Water School at  
40 Florida Gulf Coast University for specified purposes;  
41 requiring the Water School to conduct a specified  
42 study; providing requirements for the study; requiring  
43 the department to submit a report to the Executive  
44 Office of the Governor and the Legislature by a  
45 specified date; providing appropriations; requiring  
46 the South Florida Water Management District to enter  
47 into a contract with the Water School at Florida Gulf  
48 Coast University to conduct a study of the health and  
49 ecosystem of Lake Okeechobee; providing requirements  
50 for the study; requiring that the study be submitted  
51 to the Executive Office of the Governor and the  
52 Legislature by a specified date; authorizing the  
53 Department of Environmental Protection to submit  
54 budget amendments for the release of specified funds;  
55 providing an effective date.

56  
57 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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59 Section 1. Section 380.095, Florida Statutes, is created to  
60 read:

61 380.095 Dedicated funding for conservation lands,  
62 resiliency, and clean water infrastructure.-

63 (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.-The Legislature recognizes that the  
64 conservation and preservation of the land and water resources of  
65 this state are essential to maintaining the quality of life  
66 enjoyed by Floridians and to sustaining and growing a thriving  
67 state economy, including legacy industries such as tourism,  
68 agriculture, and fishing.

69 (a) The Legislature recognizes that historic investments in  
70 land conservation have fostered and will continue to foster the  
71 preservation of Florida's heritage, allow for the strategic  
72 expansion and interconnectivity of the Florida wildlife  
73 corridor, and promote the protection of crucial habitat  
74 necessary for the survival, protection, and recovery of  
75 threatened and endangered native species, including the Florida  
76 panther.

77 (b) The Legislature further recognizes that as the state  
78 acquires land, the state needs to be a good steward of the land,  
79 which necessitates the need for a commitment to provide funding  
80 at levels sufficient to ensure the proper management of such  
81 lands. These investments provide opportunities for expanded  
82 public access to state lands, including state parks, the Florida  
83 Greenways and Trails System, and game lands, among others, for  
84 recreation; and promote opportunities to protect such lands from  
85 wildfire damage and the infiltration of dangerous nonnative  
86 plant and animal species, among other benefits.

87 (c) The Legislature finds that the state is particularly

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88 vulnerable to adverse impacts from increases in the frequency  
89 and duration of rainfall events and sea level rise. The  
90 consequences of such events not only endanger human lives and  
91 properties, but also threaten Florida's natural habitats and  
92 biodiversity. The Legislature further recognizes that enhancing  
93 the state's resiliency to storm events and sea level rise is  
94 essential to Florida's economic stability and growth.

95 (d) Furthermore, the Legislature recognizes the need for  
96 additional revenue sources to address the gap in funding that is  
97 necessary to address water quality impacts, and that the  
98 projections for significant population growth further exacerbate  
99 such need.

100 (e) Therefore, the Legislature finds that it is in the best  
101 interest of the residents of the State of Florida to dedicate  
102 revenues from the gaming compact between the Seminole Tribe of  
103 Florida and the State of Florida to acquire and manage  
104 conservation lands, and to make significant investments in  
105 resiliency efforts and clean water infrastructure.

106 (2) DISTRIBUTION.—Notwithstanding s. 285.710, the  
107 Department of Revenue shall, upon receipt, deposit 96 percent of  
108 any revenue share payment received under the compact as defined  
109 in s. 285.710 into the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund within  
110 the Department of Financial Services. The funds deposited into  
111 the trust fund shall be distributed as follows:

112 (a) The sum of \$100 million to support the Florida wildlife  
113 corridor as defined in s. 259.1055, including the acquisition of  
114 lands or conservation easements within the Florida wildlife  
115 corridor. To be eligible for funding, the acquisition project  
116 must be included on a land acquisition priority list developed

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117 pursuant to s. 259.035 or s. 570.71. The funds must be  
118 appropriated in Administered Funds each fiscal year. Eligible  
119 state agencies may, on a first-come, first-served basis, submit  
120 a budget amendment to request release of funds pursuant to  
121 chapter 216. Release is contingent upon approval, if required.

122 (b) The sum of \$100 million for the management of uplands  
123 and the removal of invasive species, which must be divided as  
124 follows:

125 1. Thirty-six million to the Department of Environmental  
126 Protection, of which:

127 a. Thirty-two million to the State Park Trust Fund within  
128 the department for land management activities within the state  
129 park system; and

130 b. Four million to the Internal Improvement Trust Fund  
131 within the department for the purpose of implementing the Local  
132 Trail Management Grant Program created pursuant to s. 260.0145.

133 2. Thirty-two million to the Incidental Trust Fund within  
134 the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for land  
135 management activities.

136 3. Thirty-two million to the State Game Trust Fund within  
137 the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for land  
138 management activities, including management activities for  
139 gopher tortoises and Florida panthers.

140  
141 For sub-subparagraph 1.a. and subparagraphs 2. and 3., a land  
142 manager may not use more than 25 percent of the distribution for  
143 operation capital outlay or capital assets.

144 (c) The sum of \$100 million to the Resilient Florida Trust  
145 Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection for the

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146 Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan to be used  
147 in accordance with s. 380.093.

148 (d) The remainder to the Water Protection and  
149 Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the Department of  
150 Environmental Protection for the Water Quality Improvement Grant  
151 Program, to be used in accordance with s. 403.0673.

152 Section 2. Section 260.0145, Florida Statutes, is created  
153 to read:

154 260.0145 Local Trail Management Grant Program.—

155 (1) The Local Trail Management Grant Program is created  
156 within the department to assist local governments with costs  
157 associated with the operation and maintenance of trails within  
158 the Florida Greenways and Trails System. Funding for the program  
159 is subject to appropriation.

160 (2) A local government may receive multiple grant awards  
161 per application cycle.

162 (3) The department shall give priority to each of the  
163 following:

164 (a) A local government that provides cost share for the  
165 costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the  
166 trails, except for trails within fiscally constrained counties  
167 or rural areas of opportunity.

168 (b) Trails within the Florida wildlife corridor as defined  
169 in s. 259.1055.

170 (4) A local government may only use grant funds for the  
171 operation and maintenance of trails, including, but not limited  
172 to, the purchase of equipment and capital assets; the funding of  
173 necessary repairs to ensure the safety of trail users; and other  
174 necessary maintenance, such as pressure washing, bush pruning,

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175 and clearing debris. A local government may not use grant funds  
176 for the planning, design, or construction of trails.

177 (5) Beginning January 15, 2025, and each January 15  
178 thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the  
179 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the  
180 House of Representatives in accordance with s. 286.001 listing  
181 the grants awarded pursuant to this section. The report must  
182 include the following information for each grant award: the  
183 grant recipient's name, a description of the individual  
184 components of the trail, a description of the maintenance  
185 activities funded, the total management cost for the trail  
186 components, and the cost share, if any, provided by the  
187 recipient.

188 Section 3. Present subsection (6) of section 259.1055,  
189 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (7), and a new  
190 subsection (6) is added to that section, to read:

191 259.1055 Florida wildlife corridor.—

192 (6) MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES.—The Fish and Wildlife  
193 Conservation Commission is authorized to enter into voluntary  
194 agreements with private landowners for environmental services  
195 within the Florida wildlife corridor.

196 (a) The agreements must require that the landowner protect  
197 and restore water resources; improve management of wildlife  
198 habitat, including the long-term conservation of forest and  
199 grassland soils and native plants; manage the land in a manner  
200 that keeps the desired ecosystem healthy for protected species,  
201 such as the gopher tortoise and the Florida panther; or provide  
202 other incentives to landowners to continue and improve land uses  
203 that are both economically sustainable and beneficial to the

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204 environment of this state.

205 (b) The commission shall ensure that any agreement for  
206 environmental services entered into requires the landowner to  
207 manage the land in a manner that improves or enhances the land  
208 beyond what is required under any other agreement or contract  
209 the landowner may have with the state.

210 (c) Subject to appropriation, the commission may use land  
211 management funds received pursuant to s. 380.095 for this  
212 purpose.

213 Section 4. (1) The Land Management Uniform Accounting  
214 Council (LMUAC) shall recommend the most efficient and effective  
215 use of the funds available to state agencies for land management  
216 activities pursuant to s. 380.095, Florida Statutes. The  
217 recommendations must be based on a review of the resources of  
218 each land management agency to determine current expenditures,  
219 including personnel costs, spent specifically on upland  
220 management activities and invasive species removal. The  
221 recommendations must include a calculation methodology to  
222 distribute the funds to the state agencies specified in s.  
223 380.095(2)(b), Florida Statutes.

224 (2) The LMUAC shall adopt its initial recommendation and  
225 submit it to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President  
226 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives  
227 by January 3, 2027. Thereafter, the LMUAC shall update its  
228 recommendation in the biennial report developed pursuant to s.  
229 259.037, Florida Statutes.

230 Section 5. Subsections (3) and (7) of section 403.0673,  
231 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

232 403.0673 Water quality improvement grant program.—A grant



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233 program is established within the Department of Environmental  
234 Protection to address wastewater, stormwater, and agricultural  
235 sources of nutrient loading to surface water or groundwater.

236 (3) The department shall consider and prioritize those  
237 projects that:

238 (a) Have the maximum estimated reduction in nutrient load  
239 per project;

240 (b) Demonstrate project readiness;

241 (c) Are cost-effective;

242 (d) Have a cost share identified by the applicant, except  
243 for rural areas of opportunity;

244 (e) Have multiyear project implementation schedules with  
245 previous state commitment and involvement in the project,  
246 considering previously funded phases, the total amount of  
247 previous state funding, and previous partial appropriations for  
248 the proposed project; ~~or~~

249 (f) Are in a location where reductions are needed most to  
250 attain the water quality standards of a waterbody not attaining  
251 nutrient or nutrient-related standards; or

252 (g) Were determined eligible in a previous application  
253 cycle and were able to demonstrate project readiness but were  
254 not awarded a grant.

255  
256 Any project that does not result in reducing nutrient loading to  
257 a waterbody identified in subsection (1) is not eligible for  
258 funding under this section.

259 (7) Beginning January 15, 2024, and each January 15  
260 thereafter, the department shall submit a report regarding the  
261 projects funded pursuant to this section to the Governor, the

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262 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
263 Representatives. The report must include a list of those  
264 projects receiving funding and those projects not receiving  
265 funding which were determined eligible by the department and  
266 were able to demonstrate project readiness. The report must  
267 include ~~and~~ the following information for each project:

- 268 (a) A description of the project;  
269 (b) The cost of the project;  
270 (c) The estimated nutrient load reduction of the project;  
271 (d) The location of the project;  
272 (e) The waterbody or waterbodies where the project will  
273 reduce nutrients; ~~and~~  
274 (f) The total cost share being provided for the project;  
275 and  
276 (g) The progress made in the implementation of multiyear  
277 projects, including the funds spent, remaining costs, and  
278 remaining timeline for full implementation.

279 Section 6. (1) Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
280 distributed to the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund pursuant to  
281 s. 380.095, Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year,  
282 the sum of \$2 million in recurring funds from the General  
283 Revenue Fund is appropriated to the University of Florida to  
284 continually update the Florida Wildlife Corridor plan and the  
285 Florida Ecological Greenways Network plan.

286 Section 7. Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
287 distributed to the Department of Environmental Protection  
288 pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(d), Florida Statutes, and for the  
289 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$5 million in nonrecurring  
290 funds from the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust

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291 Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection is  
292 appropriated to the department to coordinate with the Water  
293 School at Florida Gulf Coast University to conduct a study to  
294 identify and analyze potential regional projects that meet the  
295 eligibility criteria set forth in s. 403.0673, Florida Statutes.  
296 At a minimum, the study must include the collection and  
297 consolidation of data regarding water quality to identify  
298 potential regional projects, including stormwater, hydrologic  
299 improvements, and innovative technologies, which reduce nutrient  
300 loading to water bodies identified in s. 403.0673(1), Florida  
301 Statutes. The department shall submit the report to the  
302 Executive Office of the Governor, the President of the Senate,  
303 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 3,  
304 2025.

305 Section 8. Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
306 distributed to the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund within the  
307 Department of Financial Services pursuant to s. 380.095, Florida  
308 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$100  
309 million in nonrecurring funds from trust funds is appropriated  
310 to Administered Funds for land acquisition pursuant to s.  
311 380.095(2) (a), Florida Statutes.

312 Section 9. Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
313 distributed to the Department of Environmental Protection  
314 pursuant to s. 380.095(2) (b)1., Florida Statutes, and for the  
315 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$4 million in nonrecurring  
316 funds from the Internal Improvement Trust Fund within the  
317 Department of Environmental Protection is appropriated for the  
318 purpose of implementing the Local Trail Management Grant Program  
319 created pursuant to s. 260.0145, Florida Statutes.

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320       Section 10. Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
321 distributed to the Department of Environmental Protection  
322 pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)1., Florida Statutes, and for the  
323 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$32 million in nonrecurring  
324 funds from the State Park Trust Fund within the Department of  
325 Environmental Protection is appropriated for land management  
326 activities as specified in s. 380.095(2)(b)1.a., Florida  
327 Statutes.

328       Section 11. Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
329 distributed to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer  
330 Services pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)2., Florida Statutes, and  
331 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$32 million in  
332 nonrecurring funds from the Incidental Trust Fund within the  
333 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is appropriated  
334 for land management activities as specified in s.  
335 380.095(2)(b)2., Florida Statutes.

336       Section 12. Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
337 distributed to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
338 pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)3., Florida Statutes, and for the  
339 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$32 million in nonrecurring  
340 funds from the State Game Trust Fund within the Fish and  
341 Wildlife Conservation Commission is appropriated for control of  
342 invasive species and upland land management activities pursuant  
343 to s. 380.095(2)(b)3., Florida Statutes, or s. 259.1055, Florida  
344 Statutes.

345       Section 13. Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
346 distributed to the Department of Environmental Protection  
347 pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(c), Florida Statutes, and for the  
348 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$100 million in nonrecurring

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349 funds from the Resilient Florida Trust Fund within the  
350 Department of Environmental Protection is appropriated for the  
351 Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan pursuant  
352 to s. 380.093, Florida Statutes.

353 Section 14. Contingent upon sufficient funds being  
354 distributed to the Department of Environmental Protection  
355 pursuant to s. 380.095(2) (d), Florida Statutes, and for the  
356 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$79 million in nonrecurring  
357 funds from the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust  
358 Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection is  
359 appropriated for the Water Quality Improvement Grant Program  
360 pursuant to s. 403.0673, Florida Statutes.

361 Section 15. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$150  
362 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
363 appropriated in the Aid to Local Governments - Grants and Aids -  
364 South Florida Water Management District - Operations  
365 appropriation category to the South Florida Water Management  
366 District for operations and maintenance responsibilities under  
367 the purview of the district. The funds must be placed in  
368 reserve. From the funds, the district shall enter into a  
369 contract with the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University  
370 to conduct a study of the health and ecosystem of Lake  
371 Okeechobee. The study must take into account the health of  
372 plant, fish, and wildlife to be used for future planning of  
373 invasive plant control, replanting of native vegetation, and  
374 fish and game management. The study must be submitted by January  
375 1, 2025, to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President  
376 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.  
377 The Department of Environmental Protection is authorized to

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378 submit budget amendments to request release of funds pursuant to  
379 chapter 216, Florida Statutes. Release is contingent upon the  
380 submission of a spend plan and negotiated draft contract between  
381 the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Gulf  
382 Coast University Water School.

383 Section 16. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.