

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [HB 4021](#)

**TITLE:** North River Ranch Improvement Stewardship District, Manatee County

**SPONSOR(S):** Conerly

**COMPANION BILL:** None

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

**FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:** 111 Y's 0 N's

**GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Pending

### SUMMARY

#### Effect of the Bill:

The bill amends the boundaries of the North River Ranch Improvement Stewardship District, an independent special district in Manatee County, to add approximately 640 acres to the district's boundaries.

#### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The Economic Impact Statement submitted with the bill projects the district will spend approximately \$750,000 in the first fiscal year after the bill takes effect and \$500,000 in the second fiscal year to expand district services to the area being added to the district.

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### ANALYSIS

#### **EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

The bill amends the boundaries of the [North River Ranch Improvement Stewardship District](#), an independent [special district](#) in Manatee County, to add approximately 640 acres to the district's boundaries. (Section [1](#))

Subject to the Governor's veto powers, the effective date of this bill is upon becoming a law. (Section [2](#))

#### **FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

##### LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The Economic Impact Statement submitted with the bill projects the district will spend approximately \$750,000 in the first fiscal year after the bill takes effect and \$500,000 in the second fiscal year to expand district services to the area being added to the district.

### RELEVANT INFORMATION

#### **SUBJECT OVERVIEW:**

##### Special Districts

A "special district" is a unit of local government created for a particular purpose, with jurisdiction to operate within a limited geographic boundary.<sup>1</sup> Special districts are created by general law, special act, local ordinance, or rule of the Governor and Cabinet.<sup>2</sup> A special district has only those powers expressly provided by, or reasonably implied from, the authority provided in the district's charter. Special districts provide specific municipal services in addition to, or in place of, those provided by a municipality or county.<sup>3</sup> Special districts are funded through the imposition of ad valorem taxes, fees, or charges on the users of those services as authorized by law.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Halifax Hospital Medical Center v. State of Fla., et al.*, 278 So. 3d 545, 547 (Fla. 2019).

<sup>2</sup> See ss. [189.02\(1\)](#), [189.031\(3\)](#), and [190.005\(1\)](#), F.S. See generally [s. 189.012\(6\)](#), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee, [Local Government Formation Manual](#), p. 56 (last visited Mar. 9, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> The method of financing a district must be stated in its charter. Ss. [189.02\(4\)\(g\)](#) and [189.031\(3\)](#), F.S. Independent special districts may be authorized to impose ad valorem taxes as well as non-ad valorem special assessments in the special acts

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**DATE:** 5/9/2025

Special districts may be classified as dependent or independent based on their relationship with local general-purpose governments. A special district is classified as “dependent” if the governing body of a single county or municipality:

- Serves as governing body of the district;
- Appoints the governing body of the district;
- May remove members of the district’s governing body at-will during their unexpired terms; or
- Approves or can veto the budget of the district.<sup>5</sup>

A district is classified as “independent” if it does not meet any of the above criteria or is located in more than one county, unless the district lies entirely within the boundaries of a single municipality.<sup>6</sup>

Special districts are governed generally by the Uniform Special District Accountability Act (USDAA).<sup>7</sup> The USDAA centralizes provisions governing special districts and applies to the formation,<sup>8</sup> governance,<sup>9</sup> administration,<sup>10</sup> supervision,<sup>11</sup> merger,<sup>12</sup> and dissolution<sup>13</sup> of special districts, unless otherwise expressly provided in law.<sup>14</sup> The USDAA requires notice and publication of tentative budgets and final budgets.<sup>15</sup> Certain budget amendments are allowed up to 60 days following the end of the fiscal year.<sup>16</sup>

Special districts do not possess “home rule” powers and may impose only those taxes, assessments, or fees authorized by special or general law. The special act creating an independent special district may provide for funding from a variety of sources while prohibiting others. For example, ad valorem tax authority is not mandatory for a special district.<sup>17</sup>

### **North River Ranch Improvement Stewardship District**

The North River Ranch Improvement Stewardship District (NRRISD) is an independent special district created in 2020.<sup>18</sup> The NRRISD covers land in Manatee County and its purpose is to provide infrastructure for a comprehensive community development approach that facilitates an integral relationship among regional transportation, land use, and urban design, creating a diverse mix of housing and regional employment and economic development opportunities, rather than fragmented development with underutilized infrastructure which is generally associated with urban sprawl.<sup>19</sup> The NRRISD is authorized to provide district services extraterritorially upon execution of an interlocal agreement.<sup>20</sup>

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comprising their charters. *See, e.g.,* [ch. 2023-335, s. 1\(6\), Laws of Fla.](#) (East River Ranch Stewardship District). *See also, e.g.,* ss. [190.021](#) (community development districts), [191.009](#) (independent fire control districts), [197.3631](#) (non-ad valorem assessments), [298.305](#) (water control districts), and [388.221, F.S.](#) (mosquito control). *See also* [ch. 2004-397, s. 3\(27\), Laws of Fla.](#) (South Broward Hospital District).

<sup>5</sup> S. [189.012\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> S. [189.012\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>7</sup> S. [189.01, F.S.](#), but see chs. 190, F.S. (community development districts), 191, F.S. (independent special fire control districts), 298, F.S. (water control districts), 388, F.S. (mosquito control districts), and 582, F.S. (soil and water conservation districts).

<sup>8</sup> *See* ss. [189.02](#) (creation of dependent special districts) and [189.031, F.S.](#) (creation of independent special districts).

<sup>9</sup> *See* s. [189.0311, F.S.](#) (charter requirements for independent special districts).

<sup>10</sup> *See* s. [189.019, F.S.](#) (requiring codification of charters incorporating all special acts for the district).

<sup>11</sup> *See* s. [189.0651, F.S.](#) (oversight for special districts created by special act of the Legislature).

<sup>12</sup> Ss. [189.071](#) and [189.074, F.S.](#)

<sup>13</sup> Ss. [189.071](#) and [189.072, F.S.](#)

<sup>14</sup> *See, e.g.,* s. [190.004, F.S.](#) (Ch. 190, F.S. as “sole authorization” for creation of community development districts).

<sup>15</sup> S. [189.016\(4\), F.S.](#)

<sup>16</sup> S. [189.016\(6\), F.S.](#)

<sup>17</sup> *See, e.g.,* [ch. 2006-354, Laws of Fla.](#) (Argyle Fire District may impose special assessments, but has no ad valorem tax authority).

<sup>18</sup> [Ch. 2020-191, Laws of Fla.](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Ch. 2020-191, s. 1\(2\)\(1\)\(b\), Laws of Fla.](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Ch. 2020-191, s. 1\(3\)\(4\), Laws of Fla.](#)

The district is governed by a five-member board of supervisors (board) elected by the landowners on a one-acre, one-vote basis to serve four-year terms.<sup>21</sup> As qualified electors move into the district, members will be chosen in an election of the qualified electorate rather than at a landowners’ meeting. Once 15,000 qualified electors reside within the district, all five members will be elected by the qualified electorate.<sup>22</sup>

The NRRISD is authorized to levy ad valorem taxes but only after all members of the board are elected on a popular vote basis and the levy of ad valorem taxes is approved by the district voters in a subsequent referendum.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the NRRISD may levy user charges and fees, non-ad valorem maintenance taxes as authorized by general law, maintenance special assessments, and benefit special assessments.<sup>24</sup>

The district’s charter provides that the charter may only be amended by special act of the Legislature. However, the board may not ask the Legislature to amend its charter without first obtaining a resolution or official statement from Manatee County stating the amendment is consistent with approved local government plans of the county and that the county has no objection to the amendment.<sup>25</sup> The district received this consent.<sup>26</sup>

**Local Bill Forms**

The Florida Constitution prohibits the passage of any special act unless a notice of intention to seek enactment of the bill has been published as provided by general law or the act is conditioned to take effect only upon approval by referendum vote of the electors in the area affected.<sup>27</sup> A legal advertisement of the proposed bill must be placed in a newspaper of general circulation or published on a publicly accessible website<sup>28</sup> at least 30 days prior to the introduction of the local bill in the House or Senate.<sup>29</sup> The bill was noticed in [The Bradenton Herald on January 15, 2025](#).

The House local bill policy requires a completed and signed Local Bill Certification Form and Economic Impact Statement Form be filed with the Clerk of the House at the time the local bill is filed or as soon thereafter as possible.<sup>30</sup> Under the policy, a committee or subcommittee may not consider a local bill unless these forms have been filed. The following forms have been submitted for the bill:

- [Local Bill Certification Form](#)
- [Economic Impact Statement Form](#)

**RECENT LEGISLATION:**

YEAR	BILL #	HOUSE SPONSOR(S)	SENATE SPONSOR	OTHER INFORMATION
2024	<a href="#">CS/HB 867</a>	Robinson, W.		Became a law on May 16, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> [Ch. 2020-191, s. 1\(5\), Laws of Fla.](#)  
<sup>22</sup> [Ch. 2020-191, s. 1\(5\)\(3\)\(a\)2.a\(IV\), Laws of Fla.](#)  
<sup>23</sup> [Ch. 2020-191, ss. 1\(5\)\(3\)\(a\)1. and 1\(6\)\(12\)\(a\), Laws of Fla.](#) The district currently does not levy ad valorem taxes.  
<sup>24</sup> [Ch. 2020-191, ss. 1\(6\)\(6\)\(j\) and 1\(6\)\(12\), Laws of Fla.](#)  
<sup>25</sup> [Ch. 2020-191, s. 1\(2\)\(3\)\(f\), Laws of Fla. See also s. 189.031\(2\)\(e\)4., F.S.](#)  
<sup>26</sup> See Manatee County, Board of County Commissioners, [Meeting Minutes for Jan. 8, 2025](#) (last visited Mar. 9, 2025).  
<sup>27</sup> [Art. III, s. 10, Fla. Const.](#)  
<sup>28</sup> [S. 50.0311\(2\), F.S.](#)  
<sup>29</sup> [S. 11.02, F.S.](#) If there is no newspaper circulated throughout or published in the county and no publicly accessible website has been designated, notice must be posted for at least 30 days in at least three public places in the county, one of which must be at the courthouse.  
<sup>30</sup> Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee, [Local Bill Policies and Procedures Manual](#), p. 11 (last visited Mar. 9, 2025).