

By Senator Martin

33-01424A-26

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A bill to be entitled  
An act relating to the Big Cypress Basin; amending s.  
373.0693, F.S.; revising the membership of the Big  
Cypress Basin governing board; requiring the South  
Florida Water Management District to revise the  
boundaries of the Big Cypress Basin based on a  
specified study at a specified time; removing obsolete  
language; amending s. 373.503, F.S.; requiring the  
South Florida Water Management District to ensure that  
basin ad valorem taxes collected within the Big  
Cypress Basin be used in a specified manner;  
reenacting s. 373.0697, F.S., relating to basin taxes,  
to incorporate the amendment made to s. 373.503, F.S.,  
in a reference thereto; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (9) of section 373.0693, Florida  
Statutes, is amended to read:

373.0693 Basins; basin boards.—

(9) At 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 1976, a portion of the  
Big Cypress Basin of the Ridge and Lower Gulf Coast District  
which is being annexed into the South Florida Water Management  
District by change of boundaries pursuant to chapter 76-243,  
Laws of Florida, shall be formed into a subdistrict or basin of  
the South Florida Water Management District. Such portion shall  
be designated as the Big Cypress Basin. ~~On or before December~~  
~~31, 1976,~~ The Governor shall appoint six ~~not fewer than five~~  
persons from Collier County and two persons from Lee County who

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30 reside within the Big Cypress Basin ~~residing in the area~~ to  
31 serve as members of the governing board of the basin, ~~effective~~  
32 ~~at the time of transfer and~~ subject to confirmation by the  
33 Senate as provided in subsection (4).

34 (a) The initial boundaries of the Big Cypress Basin shall  
35 be established by resolution of the governing board of Central  
36 and Southern Florida Flood Control District, after notice and  
37 hearing, and generally shall encompass the Big Cypress Swamp and  
38 southwestern coastal area hydrologic cataloging unit, as  
39 indicated on River Basin and Hydrologic Unit Map of Florida—  
40 1975, Florida Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Geology  
41 Map Series No. 72.

42 (b) At 11:59 p.m. on July 1, 2026, the governing board of  
43 the South Florida Water Management District shall establish the  
44 boundary of the Big Cypress Basin as the scientific boundary  
45 recommended in the Big Cypress Basin Boundary Delineation study  
46 that the district presented to the Legislature on January 12,  
47 2021, except that the new basin boundary may include only  
48 counties that have at least 25 percent of their jurisdictions  
49 delineated within the boundary.

50 ~~(b) If the governing board shall fail to establish the~~  
51 ~~initial boundaries on or before December 31, 1976, the initial~~  
52 ~~boundaries shall be the same boundaries as described for the Big~~  
53 ~~Cypress Basin of the Ridge and Lower Gulf Coast District.~~

54 ~~(c)~~ The governing board of the South Florida Water  
55 Management District subsequently may change the boundaries of  
56 the basin, but may not abolish the basin.

57 Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section  
58 373.503, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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373.503 Manner of taxation.—

(3) The districts may levy ad valorem taxes on property within the district solely for the purposes of this chapter and of chapter 25270, 1949, Laws of Florida, as amended, and chapter 61-691, Laws of Florida, as amended. If appropriate, taxes levied by each governing board may be separated by the governing board into a millage necessary for the purposes of the district and a millage necessary for financing basin functions specified in s. 373.0695.

(b) ~~The apportionment in~~ The South Florida Water Management District shall ensure that:

1. The apportionment within the district is ~~be~~ a maximum of 40 percent for district purposes and a maximum of 60 percent for basin purposes; and

2. The basin ad valorem taxes levied within the counties that comprise the Big Cypress Basin are used for projects and flood control operations and maintenance within the counties in which such taxes were collected, ~~respectively.~~

Section 3. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 373.503, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, section 373.0697, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

373.0697 Basin taxes.—The respective basins may, pursuant to s. 9(b), Art. VII of the State Constitution, by resolution request the governing board of the district to levy ad valorem taxes within such basin. Upon receipt of such request, a basin tax levy shall be made by the governing board of the district to finance basin functions enumerated in s. 373.0695, notwithstanding the provisions of any other general or special

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law to the contrary, and subject to the provisions of s.  
373.503(3).

(1) The amount of money to be raised by said tax levy shall be determined by the adoption of an annual budget by the district board of governors, and the average millage for the basin shall be that amount required to raise the amount called for by the annual budget when applied to the total assessment of the basin as determined for county taxing purposes. However, no such tax shall be levied within the basin unless and until the annual budget and required tax levy shall have been approved by formal action of the basin board, and no county in the district shall be taxed under this provision at a rate to exceed 1 mill.

(2) The taxes provided for in this section shall be extended by the county property appraiser on the county tax roll in each county within, or partly within, the basin and shall be collected by the tax collector in the same manner and time as county taxes, and the proceeds therefrom paid to the district for basin purposes. Said taxes shall be a lien, until paid, on the property against which assessed and enforceable in like manner as county taxes. The property appraisers, tax collectors, and clerks of the circuit court of the respective counties shall be entitled to compensation for services performed in connection with such taxes at the same rates as apply to county taxes.

(3) It is hereby determined that the taxes authorized by this subsection are in proportion to the benefits to be derived by the several parcels of real estate within the basin from the works authorized herein.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.