

Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government

CS/SB 1638 — Funding for Environmental Resource Management

by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Hutson

The bill provides that 96 percent of the revenues from the 2021 gaming compact between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the State of Florida be deposited in the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund within the Department of Financial Services to acquire and manage conservation lands and to make significant investments in resiliency efforts and clean water infrastructure.

- Provides for the distribution of funds as follows:
 - The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million to support the Florida Wildlife Corridor, including the acquisition of lands within the corridor. Eligible state agencies may submit budget amendments on a first-come, first-served basis with the release of funds contingent upon approval.
 - The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million for the management of uplands and the removal of invasive species, which is divided as follows:
 - The lesser of 36 percent or \$36 million to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), of which:
 - The lesser of 88.889 percent or \$32 million for state park land management activities; and
 - The lesser of 11.111 percent or \$4 million for implementation of the Local Trail Management Grant Program.
 - The lesser of 32 percent or \$32 million to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for land management activities.
 - The lesser of 32 percent or \$32 million to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for land management activities.
 - The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million to the DEP to the Resilient Florida Trust Fund.
 - The remainder to the DEP to the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund.

The bill requires the Land Management Uniform Accounting Council to recommend the most efficient use of land management funds provided to state agencies and submit its recommendation to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 3, 2027.

The bill makes the following appropriations from the distributions deposited in the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund and distributed as specified above:

- Appropriates \$100 million in nonrecurring funds to Administered Funds for land acquisition.
- Appropriates \$32 million in nonrecurring funds from the State Park Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection for land management activities.
- Appropriates \$4 million in nonrecurring funds from the Internal Improvement Trust Fund to the Department of Environmental Protection for the purpose of implementing the Local Trail Management Grant Program.

- Appropriates \$32 million in nonrecurring funds from the Incidental Trust Fund within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for land management activities.
- Appropriates \$32 million in nonrecurring funds from the State Game Trust Fund within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for control of invasive species and upland land management activities.
- Appropriates \$100 million in nonrecurring funds from the Resilient Florida Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection for the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan.
- Appropriates \$79 million in nonrecurring funds from the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection for the Water Quality Improvement Grant Program.
- Appropriates \$5 million in nonrecurring funds from the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund to the DEP to coordinate with the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University to conduct a study to identify and analyze potential regional projects that meet the eligibility requirements of the Water Quality Improvement Grant Program.

The bill makes the following additional appropriations:

- Appropriates \$2 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the University of Florida to continually update the Florida Wildlife Corridor plan and the Florida Ecological Greenways Network plan.
- Appropriates \$150 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) for operations and maintenance. The SFWMD shall enter into a contract with the Water School and Florida Gulf Coast University to conduct a study of the health and ecosystem of Lake Okeechobee.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law if SB 7080 or similar legislation is adopted in the same legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes a law.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0