

1 A bill to be entitled  
 2 An act relating to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund;  
 3 providing legislative findings; amending s. 375.041,  
 4 F.S.; providing an annual appropriation to the  
 5 Department of Environmental Protection to implement  
 6 the Heartland Headwaters Protection and Sustainability  
 7 Act; requiring the funds to be used and distributed  
 8 for specified purposes; removing an obsolete  
 9 provision; providing an effective date.

10

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

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13 Section 1. The Legislature finds that:

14 (1) The Legislature unanimously approved CS/CS/HB 573, the  
 15 Headwaters Protection and Sustainability Act, in 2017, to  
 16 protect the headwaters of the Alafia, Hillsborough, Kissimmee,  
 17 Ocklawaha, Peace, and Withlacoochee Rivers located in the Green  
 18 Swamp and Polk County, which are some of the most important and  
 19 vulnerable water resources in the state.

20 (2) In the same act, the Legislature declared that it is  
 21 an important state interest to partner with regional water  
 22 supply authorities and local governments, in accordance with s.  
 23 373.705, Florida Statutes, to protect the water resources of the  
 24 headwaters of the Alafia, Hillsborough, Kissimmee, Ocklawaha,  
 25 Peace, and Withlacoochee Rivers and the surrounding areas.

HB 603

2022

26       (3) In 2020, the Central Florida Water Initiative Water  
27 Supply Plan developed pursuant to s. 373.0465, Florida Statutes,  
28 projected the population of the region to reach 4.4 million by  
29 2040, which is a 49 percent increase from a 2015 estimate. The  
30 total average of surface and ground water use in the initiative  
31 planning area is projected to increase 36 percent from 667  
32 million gallons per day in 2015 to 908 million gallons per day  
33 in 2040.

34       (4) The Central Florida Water Initiative Water Supply Plan  
35 concluded that in some areas of the initiative planning area,  
36 fresh groundwater is near or has exceeded the limits of  
37 groundwater availability and that alternative water sources will  
38 need to be developed along with additional water conservation  
39 efforts and local management strategies to meet the 2040  
40 projected water demands or currently permitted allocations while  
41 allowing currently stressed water resources and natural systems  
42 to recover.

43       (5) Consistent funding support is required in order to  
44 support the efforts of the water management districts to protect  
45 the rivers, springs, and wetlands in the region while providing  
46 for responsible development of the water resources to support  
47 growth and provide for public health and safety.

48       Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section  
49 375.041, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

50       375.041 Land Acquisition Trust Fund.—

51 (3) Funds distributed into the Land Acquisition Trust Fund  
 52 pursuant to s. 201.15 shall be applied:

53 (b) Of the funds remaining after the payments required  
 54 under paragraph (a), but before funds may be appropriated,  
 55 pledged, or dedicated for other uses:

56 1. A minimum of the lesser of 25 percent or \$200 million  
 57 shall be appropriated annually for Everglades projects that  
 58 implement the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan as set  
 59 forth in s. 373.470, including the Central Everglades Planning  
 60 Project subject to Congressional authorization; the Long-Term  
 61 Plan as defined in s. 373.4592(2); and the Northern Everglades  
 62 and Estuaries Protection Program as set forth in s. 373.4595.  
 63 From these funds, \$32 million shall be distributed each fiscal  
 64 year through the 2023-2024 fiscal year to the South Florida  
 65 Water Management District for the Long-Term Plan as defined in  
 66 s. 373.4592(2). After deducting the \$32 million distributed  
 67 under this subparagraph, from the funds remaining, a minimum of  
 68 the lesser of 76.5 percent or \$100 million shall be appropriated  
 69 each fiscal year through the 2025-2026 fiscal year for the  
 70 planning, design, engineering, and construction of the  
 71 Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan as set forth in s.  
 72 373.470, including the Central Everglades Planning Project, the  
 73 Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir Project, the Lake  
 74 Okeechobee Watershed Project, the C-43 West Basin Storage  
 75 Reservoir Project, the Indian River Lagoon-South Project, the

76 Western Everglades Restoration Project, and the Picayune Strand  
77 Restoration Project. The Department of Environmental Protection  
78 and the South Florida Water Management District shall give  
79 preference to those Everglades restoration projects that reduce  
80 harmful discharges of water from Lake Okeechobee to the St.  
81 Lucie or Caloosahatchee estuaries in a timely manner. For the  
82 purpose of performing the calculation provided in this  
83 subparagraph, the amount of debt service paid pursuant to  
84 paragraph (a) for bonds issued after July 1, 2016, for the  
85 purposes set forth under paragraph (b) shall be added to the  
86 amount remaining after the payments required under paragraph  
87 (a). The amount of the distribution calculated shall then be  
88 reduced by an amount equal to the debt service paid pursuant to  
89 paragraph (a) on bonds issued after July 1, 2016, for the  
90 purposes set forth under this subparagraph.

91 2. A minimum of the lesser of 7.6 percent or \$50 million  
92 shall be appropriated annually for spring restoration,  
93 protection, and management projects. For the purpose of  
94 performing the calculation provided in this subparagraph, the  
95 amount of debt service paid pursuant to paragraph (a) for bonds  
96 issued after July 1, 2016, for the purposes set forth under  
97 paragraph (b) shall be added to the amount remaining after the  
98 payments required under paragraph (a). The amount of the  
99 distribution calculated shall then be reduced by an amount equal  
100 to the debt service paid pursuant to paragraph (a) on bonds

101 issued after July 1, 2016, for the purposes set forth under this  
102 subparagraph.

103 3. The sum of \$5 million shall be appropriated annually  
104 each fiscal year through the 2025-2026 fiscal year to the St.  
105 Johns River Water Management District for projects dedicated to  
106 the restoration of Lake Apopka. This distribution shall be  
107 reduced by an amount equal to the debt service paid pursuant to  
108 paragraph (a) on bonds issued after July 1, 2016, for the  
109 purposes set forth in this subparagraph.

110 4. The sum of \$64 million is appropriated and shall be  
111 transferred to the Everglades Trust Fund for the 2018-2019  
112 fiscal year, and each fiscal year thereafter, for the EAA  
113 reservoir project pursuant to s. 373.4598. Any funds remaining  
114 in any fiscal year shall be made available only for Phase II of  
115 the C-51 reservoir project or projects identified in  
116 subparagraph 1. and must be used in accordance with laws  
117 relating to such projects. Any funds made available for such  
118 purposes in a fiscal year are in addition to the amount  
119 appropriated under subparagraph 1. This distribution shall be  
120 reduced by an amount equal to the debt service paid pursuant to  
121 paragraph (a) on bonds issued after July 1, 2017, for the  
122 purposes set forth in this subparagraph.

123 5. The sum of \$50 million shall be appropriated annually  
124 to the South Florida Water Management District for the Lake  
125 Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project in accordance with s.

126 373.4599. This distribution must be reduced by an amount equal  
127 to the debt service paid pursuant to paragraph (a) on bonds  
128 issued after July 1, 2021, for the purposes set forth in this  
129 subparagraph.

130       6. The sum of \$20 million shall be appropriated annually  
131 to the Department of Environmental Protection to implement the  
132 Heartland Headwaters Protection and Sustainability Act pursuant  
133 to chapter 2017-111, Laws of Florida. The funds must be used to  
134 enter into financial assistance agreements and distributed in  
135 accordance with the projects identified in the Heartland  
136 Headwaters Annual Report submitted to the Legislature pursuant  
137 to s. 373.463 to finance the cost of designing or constructing  
138 projects that protect, restore, or enhance the headwaters of the  
139 river systems located in Heartland Region of Central Florida.  
140 This distribution shall be reduced by an amount equal to the  
141 debt service paid pursuant to paragraph (a) on bonds issued  
142 after July 1, 2022, for the purposes set forth in this  
143 subparagraph ~~Notwithstanding subparagraph 3., for the 2021-2022~~  
144 ~~fiscal year, funds shall be appropriated as provided in the~~  
145 ~~General Appropriations Act. This subparagraph expires July 1,~~  
146 ~~2022.~~

147       Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.