

Growth Management Reform: *Water Background*

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THE ISSUE

- Growth management reform would ensure that the water needed to serve new communities is available before dirt is turned on new development.
- Reform would ensure water is available to sustain the environment.
- Reform would coordinate water supply planning with growth management by ensuring:
 - Regional water supply plans and local government comprehensive plans are consistent;
 - Local governments plan for timely development of additional new water sources needed to serve projected growth; and
 - New development begins only when adequate water supplies are available to serve the growth.

CURRENT GROWTH MANAGEMENT LAW

- While the existing growth management process ensures that water treatment and distribution facilities will be adequate to serve new growth, the current law does not ensure that raw water is available to send to the facilities when needed.
- Water service is provided to customers through public or private utilities. To provide water, the utility must have:
 - A consumptive use permit from a water management district to withdraw water from an aquifer or a surface water body; and
 - Adequate facilities to treat and distribute the water to customers.
- Under current law, water management districts assess the availability of water supplies throughout the state.
- Where existing supplies are inadequate to meet 20-year projected water demands, the districts have prepared regional water supply plans that identify alternative water supply sources that, when developed, would serve the projected need without harming the environment.
- Under current growth management laws, local government comprehensive plans merely “consider” the districts’ regional water supply plans, which can result in a local government planning on using a source that cannot sustain additional water withdrawals or for which a consumptive use permit cannot be obtained.
- Even if a local government plans to use an alternative source outlined in the district’s regional water supply plan, adequate safeguards do not exist to ensure that the facilities needed to supply the new source of water will be “on-line” when needed to serve anticipated growth.
- As a result, local governments are approving developments for which adequate water supplies may not be available, which could lead to the over-pumping of public water supply wellfields and damage to natural resources.



A Pay As You Grow Plan For Florida's Future

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GROWTH MANAGEMENT REFORM AND PLANNING FOR WATER

The proposed bill ensures that:

- Potable water provisions of comprehensive plans are consistent with water management districts' regional water supply plans.
- Local plans identify needed water supply sources to meet existing and projected water use demands and include a work plan for building public, private and regional water supply facilities to meet those needs.
- Local government uses a water source with sufficient withdrawal capacity.
- Proposed uses of the same source by more than one local government are identified.
- In addition to the treatment and distribution facilities being ready for new development, a confirmed source of raw water has been identified to send to the facilities.
- Local government comprehensive plans contain a financially feasible five-year schedule of capital improvements so that facilities and services are available to serve future growth.
- Local governments cannot adopt comprehensive plan amendments without updating the five-year schedule annually. That is, local governments could not approve developments that would require a plan amendment if their capital improvements schedule is not up-to-date and financially feasible.
- If proposed comprehensive plan amendments create an additional demand for water supply, local governments demonstrate that their capital improvement plans can provide for the additional water, or the plans would be modified to include provision of the needed water.
- Adequate water supplies and potable water facilities would be available no later than the issuance of a development order by the local government.
- Local governments would not approve the start of new development if water supplies and facilities were not available at the time of the government's decision on the proposed development.

THE BENEFITS OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT REFORM

- Local governments and other water suppliers will proactively plan for and develop the water supplies needed to support expected growth.
- Reform will balance the needs of the economy with protection of Florida's environment.
- By coordinating water supply planning with growth management, Florida can prevent environmental degradation and a repeat of the Tampa 'water wars' in other areas of the state.



Governor Jeb Bush

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