

CHAPTER 98-402

Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 4027

An act relating to regional water supply authorities; amending s. 120.52, F.S.; providing that a member government is not considered a party in administrative proceedings under certain conditions; amending s. 373.1963, F.S.; revising criteria for governance of the West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority and its member governments under interlocal agreements; declaring legislative intent to supersede other laws; repealing s. 373.1963(5), F.S., relating to a process for review of a consumptive use permit; amending s. 682.02, F.S.; providing for the arbitration of certain controversies concerning water use; amending s. 768.28, F.S.; allowing an authority to indemnify its member governments; prohibiting the adoption of certain actions by the commission unless by a required minimum vote; providing for future termination of the commission pending legislative review of reenactment; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (12) of section 120.52, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

120.52 Definitions.—As used in this act:

(12) “Party” means:

(a) Specifically named persons whose substantial interests are being determined in the proceeding.

(b) Any other person who, as a matter of constitutional right, provision of statute, or provision of agency regulation, is entitled to participate in whole or in part in the proceeding, or whose substantial interests will be affected by proposed agency action, and who makes an appearance as a party.

(c) Any other person, including an agency staff member, allowed by the agency to intervene or participate in the proceeding as a party. An agency may by rule authorize limited forms of participation in agency proceedings for persons who are not eligible to become parties.

(d) Any county representative, agency, department, or unit funded and authorized by state statute or county ordinance to represent the interests of the consumers of a county, when the proceeding involves the substantial interests of a significant number of residents of the county and the board of county commissioners has, by resolution, authorized the representative, agency, department, or unit to represent the class of interested persons. The authorizing resolution shall apply to a specific proceeding and to appeals and ancillary proceedings thereto, and it shall not be required to state the names of the persons whose interests are to be represented.

The term “party” does not include a member government of a regional water supply authority or a governmental or quasi-judicial board or commission established by local ordinance or special or general law where the governing membership of such board or commission is shared with, in whole or in part, or appointed by a member government of a regional water supply authority in proceedings under s. 120.569, s. 120.57, or s. 120.68, to the extent that an interlocal agreement under ss. 163.01 and 373.1962 exists in which the member government has agreed that its substantial interests are not affected by the proceedings or that it is to be bound by alternative dispute resolution in lieu of participating in the proceedings. This exclusion applies only to those particular types of disputes or controversies, if any, identified in an interlocal agreement.

Section 2. Present subsection (5) of section 373.1963, Florida Statutes, is repealed, subsection (1) of said section is amended, subsections (2), (3), and (4) are renumbered as subsections (3), (4), and (5), respectively, and a new subsection (2) is added to said section, to read:

373.1963 Assistance to West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority.—

(1) It is the intent of the Legislature to authorize ~~encourage and facilitate~~ the implementation of changes in governance recommended by the West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority in its ~~reports~~ report to the Legislature dated February 1, 1997, ~~and. The authority shall submit a supplemental report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the status of implementing its prior recommendations for changes in governance by January 5, 1998. The authority and its member governments may reconstitute the authority's its governance and rename the authority in a manner consistent with its report to the Legislature, and with the provisions set forth herein, under a voluntary interlocal agreement with a term of not less than 20 years. The interlocal agreement must comply with this subsection, which substantially provides as follows:~~

(a) The authority and its member governments agree that cooperative efforts are mandatory to meet their water needs in a manner that will provide adequate and dependable supplies of water where needed without resulting in adverse environmental effects upon the areas from which the water is withdrawn or otherwise produced.

(b) In accordance with s. 4, Art. VIII of the State Constitution and notwithstanding s. 163.01, the interlocal agreement may include the following terms, which are considered approved by the parties without a vote of their electors, upon execution of the interlocal agreement by all member governments and upon satisfaction of all conditions precedent in the interlocal agreement: To the extent provided in the interlocal agreement, and to the extent permitted by law:

1. All member governments shall relinquish to the authority their individual rights to develop potable water supply sources, except as otherwise provided in the interlocal agreement;

2. The authority shall be the sole and exclusive wholesale potable water supplier for all member governments; and

3. The authority shall have the absolute and unequivocal obligation to meet the wholesale needs of the member governments for potable water.

4. A member government may not restrict or prohibit the use of land within a member's jurisdictional boundaries by the authority for water supply purposes through use of zoning, land use, comprehensive planning, or other form of regulation.

5. A member government may not impose any tax, fee, or charge upon the authority in conjunction with the production or supply of water not otherwise provided for in the interlocal agreement.

6. The authority may use the powers provided in part II of chapter 159 for financing and refinancing water treatment, production, or transmission facilities, including, but not limited to, desalinization facilities. All such water treatment, production, or transmission facilities are considered a "manufacturing plant" for purposes of s. 159.27(5) and serve a paramount public purpose by providing water to citizens of the state.

7. A member government and any governmental or quasi-judicial board or commission established by local ordinance or general or special law where the governing membership of such board or commission is shared, in whole or in part, or appointed by a member government agreeing to be bound by the interlocal agreement shall be limited to the procedures set forth therein regarding actions that directly or indirectly restrict or prohibit the use of lands or other activities related to the production or supply of water.

(c) The authority shall acquire full or lesser interests in all regionally significant member government wholesale water supply facilities and tangible assets and each member government shall convey such interests in the facilities and assets to the authority, at an agreed value.

(d) The authority shall charge a uniform per gallon wholesale rate to member governments for the wholesale supply of potable water. All capital, operation, maintenance, and administrative costs for existing facilities and acquired facilities, authority master water plan facilities, and other future projects must be allocated to member governments based on water usage at the uniform per gallon wholesale rate.

~~(e) To the extent provided in~~ The interlocal agreement may include ~~and to the extent permitted by law, member governments shall develop~~ procedures for resolving the parties' ~~their~~ differences regarding water management district proposed agency action in the water use permitting process within the authority. Such procedures should minimize the potential for litigation and include alternative dispute resolution. Any governmental or quasi-judicial board or commission established by local ordinance or general or special law where the governing members of such board or commission is shared, in whole or in part, or appointed by a member government, may agree to be bound by the dispute resolution procedures set forth in the interlocal agreement. ~~Nothing herein or in said procedures shall affect the rights of participants under chapter 120.~~

(f) Upon execution of the voluntary interlocal agreement provided for herein, the authority shall jointly develop with the Southwest Florida Water Management District alternative sources of potable water and transmission pipelines to interconnect regionally significant water supply sources and facilities of the authority in amounts sufficient to meet the needs of all member governments for a period of at least 20 years and for natural systems. Nothing herein, however, shall preclude the authority and its member governments from developing traditional water sources pursuant to the voluntary interlocal agreement. Development and construction costs for alternative source facilities, which may include a desalination facility and significant regional interconnects, must be borne as mutually agreed to by both the authority and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Nothing herein shall preclude authority or district cost sharing with private entities for the construction or ownership of alternative source facilities. By December 31, 1997, the authority and the Southwest Florida Water Management District shall:

1. Enter into a mutually acceptable agreement detailing the development and implementation of directives contained in this paragraph; or
2. Jointly prepare and submit to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report describing the progress made and impediments encountered in their attempts to implement the water resource development and water supply development directives contained in this paragraph.

Nothing in this ~~section subsection~~ shall be construed to modify the rights or responsibilities of the authority ~~or~~, its member governments, except as otherwise provided herein, or of the Southwest Florida Water Management District or the department pursuant to chapter 373 or chapter 403 and as otherwise set forth by statutes.

(g) Unless otherwise provided in the interlocal agreement, the authority shall be governed by a board of commissioners consisting of nine voting members, all of whom must be elected officers, as follows:

1. Three members from Hillsborough County who must be selected by the county commission; provided, however, that one member shall be selected by the Mayor of Tampa in the event that the City of Tampa elects to be a member of the authority;
2. Three members from Pasco County, two of whom must be selected by the county commission and one of whom must be selected by the City Council of New Port Richey;
3. Three members from Pinellas County, two of whom must be selected by the county commission and one of whom must be selected by the City Council of St. Petersburg.

Except as otherwise provided in this section or in the voluntary interlocal agreement between the member governments, a majority vote shall bind the

authority and its member governments in all matters relating to the funding of wholesale water supply, production, delivery, and related activities.

(2) The provisions of this section supersede any conflicting provisions contained in all other general or special laws or provisions thereof as they may apply directly or indirectly to the exclusivity of water supply or withdrawal of water, including provisions relating to the environmental effects, if any, in conjunction with the production and supply of potable water, and the provisions of this section are intended to be a complete revision of all laws related to a regional water supply authority created under ss. 373.1962 and 373.1963.

Section 3. Section 682.02, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

682.02 Arbitration agreements made valid, irrevocable, and enforceable; scope.—Two or more parties may agree in writing to submit to arbitration any controversy existing between them at the time of the agreement, or they may include in a written contract a provision for the settlement by arbitration of any controversy thereafter arising between them relating to such contract or the failure or refusal to perform the whole or any part thereof. This section also applies to written interlocal agreements under ss. 163.01 and 373.1962 in which two or more parties agree to submit to arbitration any controversy between them concerning water use permit applications and other matters, regardless of whether or not the water management district with jurisdiction over the subject application is a party to the interlocal agreement or a participant in the arbitration. Such agreement or provision shall be valid, enforceable, and irrevocable without regard to the justiciable character of the controversy; provided that this act shall not apply to any such agreement or provision to arbitrate in which it is stipulated that this law shall not apply or to any arbitration or award thereunder.

Section 4. Subsection (18) of section 768.28, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

768.28 Waiver of sovereign immunity in tort actions; recovery limits; limitation on attorney fees; statute of limitations; exclusions; indemnification; risk management programs.—

(18) Neither the state nor any agency or subdivision of the state waives any defense of sovereign immunity, or increases the limits of its liability, upon entering into a contractual relationship with another agency or subdivision of the state. Such a contract must not contain any provision that requires one party to indemnify or insure the other party for the other party's negligence or to assume any liability for the other party's negligence. This does not preclude a party from requiring a nongovernmental entity to provide such indemnification or insurance. The restrictions of this subsection do not prevent a regional water supply authority from indemnifying and assuming the liabilities of its member governments for obligations arising from past acts or omissions at or with property acquired from a member government by the authority and arising from the acts or omissions of the authority in performing activities contemplated by an interlocal agreement. Such indemnification may not be considered to increase or otherwise waive the limits of liability to third-party claimants established by this section.

Section 5. (1)(a) The Miami River Commission is hereby established as the official coordinating clearinghouse for all public policy and projects related to the Miami River to unite all governmental agencies, businesses, and residents in the area to speak with one voice on river issues, to develop coordinated plans, priorities, programs, projects, and budgets that might substantially improve the river area, and to act as the principal advocate and watchdog to ensure that river projects are funded and implemented in a proper and timely manner.

(b) The commission may seek and receive funding to further its coordinating functions regarding river improvement projects of the commission. Nothing in this act affects or supersedes the regulatory authority of any governmental agency or any local government and any responsibilities of any governmental entity relating to the Miami River shall remain with such respective governmental entity. However, the commission may accept any specifically defined coordinating authority or functions delegated to the commission by any governmental entity, through a memorandum of understanding or other legal instrument. The commission shall use powers of persuasion to achieve its objectives through the process of building a consensus work plan and through widespread publication of regular progress reports.

(2) The Miami River Commission shall consist of:

(a) A policy committee comprised of the Governor, the chair of the Dade delegation, the chair of the governing board of the South Florida Water Management District, the Miami-Dade County State Attorney, the Mayor of Miami, the Mayor of Miami-Dade County, a commissioner of the City of Miami Commission, a commissioner of the Miami-Dade County Commission, the chair of the Miami River Marine Group, the chair of the Marine Council, the Executive Director of the Downtown Development Authority, and the chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce; two neighborhood representatives, selected from the Spring Garden Neighborhood Association, the Grove Park Neighborhood Association, and the Miami River Neighborhood Enhancement Corporation, one neighborhood representative to be appointed by the city commission and one neighborhood representative to be appointed by the county commission, each selected from a list of 3 names submitted by each such organization; one representative from an environmental or civic association, appointed by the Governor; and three members-at-large, who shall be persons who have a demonstrated history of involvement on the Miami River through business, residence, or volunteer activity, one appointed by the Governor, one appointed by the city commission, and one appointed by the county commission. All members shall be voting members. The committee shall also include a member of the United States Congressional delegation and the Captain of the Port of Miami as a representative of the United States Coast Guard, as nonvoting, ex officio members. The policy committee may meet monthly, but shall meet at least quarterly.

(b) A managing director who has the responsibility to implement plans and programs.

(c) A working group consisting of all governmental agencies that have jurisdiction in the Miami River area, as well as representatives from business and civic associations.

(3) The policy committee shall have the following powers and duties:

(a) Consolidate existing plans, programs, and proposals into a coordinated strategic plan for improvement of the Miami River and surrounding areas, addressing environmental, economic, social, recreational, and aesthetic issues. The committee shall monitor the progress on each element of such plan and shall revise the plan regularly.

(b) Prepare an integrated financial plan using the different jurisdictional agencies available for projected financial resources. The committee shall monitor the progress on each element of such plan and revise the plan regularly.

(c) Provide technical assistance and political support as needed to help implement each element of the strategic and financial plans.

(d) Accept any specifically defined coordinating authority or function delegated to the committee by any level of government through a memorandum of understanding or other legal instrument.

(e) Publicize a semiannual report describing accomplishments of the commission and each member agency, as well as the status of each pending task. The committee shall distribute the report to the City and County Commissions and Mayors, the Governor, chair of the Dade County delegation, stakeholders and the local media.

(f) Seek grants from public and private sources and receive grant funds to provide for the enhancement of its coordinating functions and activities and administer contracts that achieve these goals.

(g) Coordinate a joint planning area agreement between the Department of Community Affairs, the city, and the county under the provisions of s. 163.3177(11)(a),(b), and (c), Florida Statutes.

(h) Provide a forum for exchange of information and facilitate the resolution of conflicts.

(i) Act as a clearinghouse for public information and conduct public education programs.

(j) Establish the Miami River working group, appoint members to the group, and organize subcommittees, delegate tasks, and seek council from members of the working group as necessary to carry out the powers and duties listed in this subsection.

(k) Elect officers and adopt rules of procedure as necessary to carry out the powers and duties listed above and solicit appointing authorities to name replacements for policy committee members who do not participate on a regular basis.

(l) Hire the managing director, who shall be authorized to represent the commission and to implement all policies, plans, and programs of the commission. The committee shall employ any additional staff necessary to assist the managing director.

Section 6. (1) No item, motion, directive, or policy position that would impact or in any way diminish levels of currently permitted commercial activity on the Miami River or riverfront properties shall be adopted by the Miami River Commission unless passed by a unanimous vote of the appointed members of the commission then in office.

(2) No item, motion, directive, or policy position suggesting, proposing, or otherwise promoting additional taxes, fees, charges, or any other financial obligation on owners of riverfront property or shipping companies or operators shall be adopted by the Miami River Commission unless passed by a unanimous vote of all appointed members of the commission then in office.

Section 7. The Miami River Commission shall terminate July 1, 2003, unless the Legislature, in a review of the creation, operation, and accomplishments of the Miami River Commission during the 2003 Regular Session, determines that the commission should be continued and reenacts provisions providing for its continuation.

Section 8. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 10, 1998.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 10, 1998.