

CHAPTER 2023-293

Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 1405

An act relating to biosolids; creating s. 403.0674, F.S.; establishing a biosolids grant program within the Department of Environmental Protection; authorizing the department, subject to legislative appropriation, to provide grants to counties, special districts, and municipalities for certain wastewater conversion projects; providing eligibility, prioritization, and funding requirements; authorizing the department to waive the funding match requirement for specified projects; requiring the department to develop specified annual reporting requirements for counties, special districts, and municipalities awarded such grants; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 403.0674, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

403.0674 Biosolids grant program.—A biosolids grant program is established within the department.

(1) Subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature, the department may provide grants to counties, special districts, and municipalities in this state to support projects that:

(a) Evaluate and implement innovative technologies and solutions for the disposal of biosolids; or

(b) Construct, upgrade, expand, or retrofit domestic facilities that convert wastewater residuals to Class AA biosolids, nonfertilizer uses or disposal methods, or alternatives to synthetic fertilizers.

(2) An applicant for a biosolids grant must be a county, special district, or municipality; however, applicants are encouraged to form public-private partnerships with private utilities and firms.

(3) Projects eligible for funding under this section may include, but are not limited to, projects that:

(a) Reduce the amount of nutrients in biosolids.

(b) Reduce the amount of emerging contaminants in biosolids.

(c) Provide alternatives to the land application or landfilling of biosolids as a method of disposal.

(4) In allocating grant funds, the department shall prioritize projects by considering the environmental benefit that a project may provide. To

evaluate the environmental benefit of a project, the department shall review an analysis of how the project's conversion of wastewater residuals to Class AA biosolids, nonfertilizer uses or disposal methods, alternatives to synthetic fertilizers derived from wastewater residuals, or innovative technologies and solutions for the disposal of biosolids are projected to minimize the impact of nutrients and other pollutants on water quality and the environment.

(5) The department shall administer the grant program so that at least 10 percent of the funds made available each year under this section are reserved for projects within an area designated as a rural area of opportunity under s. 288.0656. If the department does not receive sufficient applications for projects within an area designated as a rural area of opportunity, the department may reallocate the reserved funds to other projects prioritized by the department pursuant to subsection (4).

(6)(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), the department shall require that each biosolids grant has a minimum of a 50 percent funding match from local, state, federal, or private funds.

(b) The department may waive, in whole or in part, the funding match requirement in paragraph (a) for proposed projects within an area designated as a rural area of opportunity under s. 288.0656.

(7) The department shall develop annual reporting requirements for each county, special district, or municipality awarded a grant under this section which must include the phosphorous and nitrogen content, the type, and the amount of each grant-funded product derived from wastewater residuals and the buyers and users of such products.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.

Approved by the Governor June 26, 2023.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 26, 2023.