

FROM THE OFFICE OF  
GOVERNOR  
RON DESANTIS

@GOVRONDESANTIS | WWW.FLGOV.COM | 850-717-9282 | MEDIA@EOG.MYFLORIDA.COM

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**Contact:** Governor's Press Office, (850) 717-9282, [media@eog.myflorida.com](mailto:media@eog.myflorida.com)

## **Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Major Legislation to Dedicate Gaming Compact Revenues to Preserve and Protect Florida's Environment**

**FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.**—Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill (SB) 1638, Funding for Environmental Resource Management, which provides \$150 million for necessary repairs and upgrades to the Central and South Florida Water Management System. The bill further directs 96% of the revenue generated from the Seminole Tribe Compact to fund water quality improvement, infrastructure, and the continued acquisition and management of Florida's conservation lands. As of February 2024, the revenue share estimates are approximately \$750 million per year.

"Among Florida's greatest assets are its natural resources," **said Governor Ron DeSantis.** "This revenue stream will further enhance our efforts to conserve our natural resources, protect our waterways, and make our ecological infrastructure more resilient."

"In recent years, our state has made unprecedented investments to protect our wild spaces, improve water quality and preserve our natural resources," **said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Shawn Hamilton.** "The consistent revenue stream from this legislation will allow the state to double down on its efforts to protect Florida's natural resources for generations to come."

"When it comes to enhancing quality of life for Floridians, these supplemental revenues for flood protection infrastructure and the conservation and maintenance of our natural and working landscapes leave much less to chance," **said Florida's Chief Resilience Officer Dr. Wes Brooks.** "Governor DeSantis and the Legislature continue to deliver impactful investments that ensure the resilience of our communities and the sustainability of Florida's natural resources."

"Investing in our environment, natural resources, and water management infrastructure is vital to maintain our high quality of life in the State of Florida," **said Scott Wagner, Vice-Chair, South Florida Water Management District Governing Board.** "These funds are absolutely critical towards achieving that goal. Thank you, Governor DeSantis, President Kathleen Passidomo, Speaker Renner, and the Florida Legislature

for your steadfast commitment to clean water infrastructure. We look forward to a continued partnership with all of you as we continue to protect our water resources and conduct the important work of the South Florida Water Management District.”

The South Florida Water Management District will receive \$150 million for necessary repairs and upgrades to the Central and South Florida Water Management System and to conduct a study of the health of Lake Okeechobee in conjunction with the Florida Gulf Coast University Water School. The South Florida Water Management District operates the Central and South Florida Water Management System, which provides water for more than 9 million Floridians daily and protects parts of the state from potentially dangerous flooding conditions. The water management system also provides water for businesses and communities from Orlando to the Florida Keys.

In addition to the repairs and upgrades to the Central and South Florida Water Management System, the South Florida Water Management District will also utilize funds to conduct a study of Lake Okeechobee in conjunction with Florida Gulf Coast University Water School. The study will be used for future planning of invasive plant control, replanting of native vegetation and fish and game management.

For Fiscal Year 2024-2025, this legislation appropriates the following distributions of the Seminole Gaming Compact revenues:

- **\$100 million** for land acquisitions within the Florida Wildlife Corridor to create crucial linkages for wildlife habitat.
- **\$100 million** for the management of uplands and the removal of invasive species, which includes:
  - **\$36 million** to the Department of Environmental Protection.
  - **\$32 million** to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
  - **\$32 million** to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- **\$100 million** for the Resilient Florida Grant Program which will guard inland and coastal communities against the impacts of storm damage, surges, hurricanes and flooding
- **\$79 million** for Water Quality Improvement Grant Program.

In future years, SB 1638 designates compact revenue as below:

- The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million to support the Florida Wildlife Corridor.
- 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 DEP, of which:
    - The lesser of 88.889 percent or \$32 million for state park and land management services.
    - The lesser of 11.111 percent or \$4 million for implementation of the Local Trail Management Grant Program.
  - The lesser 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 FWC 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. Based on estimates, the compact revenues could provide approximately \$450 million in future years for this program.

In 2021, Governor DeSantis struck a historic gaming compact with the Seminole Tribe of Florida to generate the state an estimated \$6 billion through 2030. Prior to this, the state was not receiving any revenue from gaming activities on tribal lands.

Read the full legislation [here](#).

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