

THE APALACHICOLA ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP BILL

A LEGACY INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE, WATER QUALITY, & WORKFORCE HOUSING



The Apalachicola Environmental Stewardship Bill is a 2019 legislative initiative by the City of Apalachicola to establish funding sources that address our most pressing needs: infrastructure improvements to our wastewater, drinking water, and stormwater systems; water quality protection; and workforce housing.

The Apalachicola Bay Area Protection Act passed in 1986 established Franklin County as an Area of Critical State Concern. This is a State designation in recognition of the significant environmental sensitivity and natural resources of the area and the State's interest in protecting them. The legislative intent included protecting the water quality of the Apalachicola Bay to ensure a healthy environment and a thriving economy. In 1994, the State removed the Area of Critical State Concern designation from the remainder of Franklin County. Today, the City of Apalachicola is one of only two populated areas in Florida that remain designated as an Area of Critical State Concern. Monroe County, the other area that shares this designation, has received \$28.3 million over the last three years to support the same type initiatives. The Apalachicola Environmental Stewardship Bill builds on the Legislature's intent to support our unique needs and asks for comparable funding. The Bill specifically requests the following:

- **Nearshore water quality protection through wastewater and stormwater infrastructure improvements.** The City's aging infrastructure is failing and unable to support future development. The Bill requests \$17 million to repair and upgrade our systems to safeguard our unique environment.
- **Drinking water improvements.** The Bill requests \$1.6 million to install a filtration system mandated by the State to bring the levels of Trihalomethanes into compliance with Federal standards.
- **Water quality protection through land acquisition.** The Bill requests \$4 million per year over the next ten years for land acquisition and capital improvements to facilitate public access.
- **Updates to Tourist Impact Tax statutes.** The Apalachicola Environmental Stewardship Act will update the State statutes to match Apalachicola's unique situation as the only part of the County that remains an Area of Critical State Concern. Proposed statute amendments would require approval of a city-wide rather than county-wide referendum, allow the City to retain 100% of these funds, and support the naming of a local municipal decision-making body. It is important to note that the Tourist Impact Tax can be levied only within Areas of Critical State Concern. If approved through a city-wide referendum, this **1% bed tax levied on visitors would generate an estimated \$130,000 annually for infrastructure and/or workforce housing projects within the Apalachicola Area of Critical State Concern.**
- **The passage of the Apalachicola Environmental Stewardship Bill is critical to the future of our City. Your support is appreciated.**

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