

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, OPPOSING ANY PROPOSAL TO DEplete THE ST. JOHNS RIVER BY WITHDRAWING ADDITIONAL WATER FROM THE ST. JOHNS RIVER AND OCKLAWAHA RIVER; STRONGLY ENCOURAGING THE ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO THIS WITHDRAWAL FROM THE RIVER AND ITS POTENTIAL CRITICAL DETRIMENTAL ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT TO ALL COMMUNITIES ON THE 310 MILES OF THE ST. JOHNS RIVER; AND PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL OF COPIES OF THE RESOLUTION.

RECITALS:

WHEREAS, St. Johns County, Florida ("the County") desires to protect the ecological, biological and economic well-being of the St. Johns River, one of Florida's greatest natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the St. Johns River is one of fourteen (14) designated American Heritage Rivers in the United States; and

WHEREAS, many species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, shellfish, and more depend upon the St. Johns River as a source of food and habitat; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 80-90% of Florida's fish and shellfish species depend on estuaries for part of their lifecycle; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to protect the St. Johns River to provide for continued habitat to sustain the plants and wildlife and to sustain the fishing and shrimping industry and ecotourism activities; and

WHEREAS, the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) has determined that an excess of an additional 150 million gallons of water daily could be removed from the St. Johns River between the headwaters of the River and the City of Deland to provide drinking water; and

WHEREAS, according to the SJRWMD, the total proposed withdrawal from the St. Johns and the Ocklawaha Rivers could exceed 260 million gallons daily; and

WHEREAS, of the Counties receiving the withdrawn water, none, except Volusia County, has mandatory water conservation programs; and

WHEREAS, the SJRWMD has not required the development and implementation of any mandatory water conservation programs for the requesting Counties prior to those Counties removing these water resources from the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers; and

WHEREAS, the withdrawal of the water will cause the St. Johns River salinity line to shift upstream, especially during drought and low flow conditions; and

WHEREAS, no one, including the SJRWMD, fully understands all of the potential impacts to the River's ecological and biological health or the impact on fisheries and other livelihoods dependent on the River from the proposed withdrawals; and

WHEREAS, once the removal of the water has begun and the impacts, whatever they may be, occur, the reversal of allowing such water withdrawal will be difficult if not impossible;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY FLORIDA:

Section 1. The above Recitals are hereby incorporated by reference and adopted as findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Section 2. The County does hereby express its strong opposition to the additional withdrawal of millions of gallons of water daily from the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers, without first requiring effective mandatory water conservation programs by the receiving Counties prior to withdrawing additional water from an irreplaceable natural resource. The County further opposes any withdrawal of millions of gallons of water daily without fully understanding the ecological, biological and other potential impacts that such a removal could have on the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers and their tributaries on a whole which includes impacts to the economy, and the citizens with their property, health and welfare.

Section 3. The County fully supports the SJRWMD in any and all efforts to establish water conservation programs and to study and establish reverse osmosis or desalinization programs as a means of providing water needs for all Floridians for today and as well as into the future.

Section 4. The County Administrator is authorized and directed to send copies of this Resolution to members of the St. Johns River Water Management District Governing Board, Governor Charlie Christ and others as may be deemed appropriate.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County, Florida, this 8th day of January, 2008.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: Thomas G. Manuel
Thomas G. Manuel, Chairman

ATTEST: Cheryl Strickland, Clerk of Court

By: Pam Halterma
Deputy Clerk

RENDITION DATE 01/11/08

Effective Date: January 8th, 2008