

## Florida Conservation Coalition 2018 Florida Legislative Wrap-Up

By Gladys Delgadillo, FCC Administrator

The 2018 legislative session officially concluded yesterday.

You can read FCC's complete list of bill summaries [here](#) and I've included some highlights from last week below. If you feel strongly about the fate of any of the environmental bills you've been following, I encourage you to let [your legislators](#) know. Now that lawmakers are returning home to their districts, they should have more time to meet with their constituents.

### What Passed

The following bills were supported by the Legislature and are being sent to the Governor:

- The **final budget** bill included \$100.8 million for land conservation, \$50 million for springs restoration, and \$248.1 million for Everglades restoration.
- The Senate passed **HB 7043**, [the bad wetlands bill we've been writing you about](#), 35 – 1. Only Senator Rodriguez voted “No.” **If you haven't yet, there is still time to call Governor Scott at (850) 488 – 4441 and ask him to VETO the bill.**
- Among other things, **HB 1149** will encourage **reclaimed water** to be pumped into our **aquifers**, where 90% of Floridians get their drinking water. Environmentalists are concerned that reclaimed water (treated wastewater) includes pharmaceuticals that are not regulated and are not removed by current treatment practices. The long-term health effects of drinking low concentrations of multiple pharmaceuticals are not known. The final version of HB 1149 also included the language from **HB 837** and **SB 992**. HB 837 creates the Blue Star Collection System Assessment and Maintenance Program focused on providing incentives

for utilities to take actions which reduce the likelihood of sewer overflows and unauthorized discharges. SB 992 changes the conditions, set in 2017's SB 10, the C-51 reservoir must operate under as state funds were appropriated for the project.



- **SB 168** creates a pilot program focused on mitigating the impact of priority **invasive species** on public lands and waters.
- Proponents say **HB 703** and **HB 705** will streamline the sale of Water Management District **surplus lands** and allow those lands to be sold for more money. Proceeds from the sale of surplus conservation lands are used to buy new conservation properties.

## What Failed

The following bills died:

- **SB 370** would have dedicated \$100 million annually to the **Florida Forever Trust Fund** and prohibited the Legislature from spending Amendment One money on certain administrative expenses. It was supported unanimously by the Senate, but the House never picked it up.
- **SB 462**, a bill which would have banned “fracking” in Florida, passed its first 2 committees. However, the House companion, **HB 237**, was never considered in the House.
- **SB 316** and **HB 203** would have established a 90-day deadline for **Florida’s Governor to fill vacancies on the Environmental Regulation Commission**. This would have ensured that important stakeholders are represented on the Commission when it makes important decisions **about Florida’s water quality**. **SB 316 passed 2 of its 3 committees and died in the Senate Rules Committee**. **HB 203 passed 1 of 3 committees and died in the House Judiciary Committee**.



- **SB 574 and HB 521** would have limited local governments' ability to regulate **tree trimming and removal**.
  - **SB 1664** would have required state and local governments to work with wastewater utilities to develop **septic system remediation plans** if DEP finds that septic system pollution is getting in the way of meeting water quality goals. The bill passed 2 of 3 committee stops in the Senate, but did not have a House companion.
  - **SB 542** would have required construction contractors to conduct a **sea level impact study** before beginning work on coastal projects funded in whole or part by the State. The bill was never considered in the Senate and did not have a House companion.
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- **HB 791** was an effort to arbitrarily reduce the amount of rules in the **Florida Administrative Code**. The bill passed 2 of 3 committees in the House. SB 1238, the Senate companion, was never considered.

Thank you so much for staying engaged this session and calling your legislators about important environmental bills! It was certainly a whirlwind and I so appreciate everyone who took time out of their busy days to let the **Legislature know the public cares about Florida's waters, wildlife, and wild lands**.

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