

**RESOLUTION  
2017-008**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF LEVY COUNTY, FLORIDA, REQUESTING THE PROTECTION  
OF THE HISTORIC SUWANNEE RIVER IN NORTH FLORIDA.**

**WHEREAS**, Levy County is located in North Central Florida and is bordered by the Historic Suwannee River on its western side; and

**WHEREAS**, the Historic Suwannee River is one of the most widely known and recognized river systems in the world; and

**WHEREAS**, the Withlacoochee River (North) begins at its headwaters in South Georgia, and flows into the Historic Suwannee River in northern Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, Levy County and each of the Florida counties bordered by the Historic Suwannee River share a great passion for the vitality and life of the river; and

**WHEREAS**, the Historic Suwannee River is a vital economic engine in the Suwannee valley region, providing nature based recreation opportunities including numerous springs, paddling, swimming, fishing, bike trails, hiking, and wildlife viewing, all of which provide local residents and visitors increased health benefits for participation in outdoor recreational activities; and

**WHEREAS**, beginning in 2009 and continuing over the past several years, the City of Valdosta, Georgia has experienced numerous failures and spills at their wastewater treatment facilities resulting in the release of millions of gallons of raw sewage into the Withlacoochee River, which in turn, flows directly into the Historic Suwannee River; and

**WHEREAS**, these failures have resulted in numerous Florida Department of Health advisories to the residents of and visitors to several North Florida counties, including Levy County, to avoid contact with the Withlacoochee River and the

Historic Suwannee River, and numerous residents along the rivers have reported positive tests of bacterial contamination of residential wells; and

**WHEREAS**, these failures also resulted in a 2013 consent decree between the City of Valdosta and Georgia's Environmental Protection Department regarding the construction of new wastewater treatment facilities and the institution of updated response and reporting procedures; and

**WHEREAS**, yet again, on January 22, 2017, the City of Valdosta had another failure resulting in the release of million gallons of raw sewage and contaminated stormwater into the Withlacoochee River which again resulted in the Florida Department of Health issuing public health advisories warning the public of wastewater contamination in the Withlacoochee River and portions of the Historic Suwannee River, which resulted in warnings being posted at all public access areas along the rivers stating that the rivers were not safe for recreational use and every precaution should be taken to avoid any contact with the river; and

**WHEREAS**, Levy County takes note of and supports the January 27, 2017 letter of District 10 Representative Elizabeth Porter, and the February 3, 2017 letter of Senator Bill Nelson to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requesting, respectively, that "...EPA take all necessary actions toward ensuring unauthorized and unlawful discharges from the City's wastewater treatment plant are prevented..." and that "Environmental Protection Agency should help both states find a long-term solution to fix the problems causing these recurring spills" and fully pledges its support to Representative Porter's and Senator Nelson's efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, Levy County has worked tirelessly with its municipalities and business community to attract businesses and increase outdoor river based eco-tourism to create jobs and grow the economies of our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, as a fiscally constrained county, Levy County must rely on the State of Florida to help insure that Valdosta, Georgia eliminates the dumping of raw sewage into our rivers.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of County Commissioners, of Levy County, Florida that:

1. Levy County requests the Honorable Governor Rick Scott, other elected Florida State leaders, and Florida's State agencies, to use the resources of the State of Florida to protect the Historic Suwannee River and the Withlacoochee River, to protect the personal health and business interests of the citizens of North Florida, including Levy County, to support the efforts of Representative Porter and Senator Nelson to take appropriate aggressive and timely actions as are necessary to ensure that Valdosta, Georgia eliminates the dumping of raw sewage into our rivers and help provide Levy County the resources its citizens so desperately need to restore the image of our rivers and our communities as a great place to live, visit, and do business.

2. The Clerk of the Circuit Court and Ex-Officio Clerk to the Board of the County Commissioners is hereby directed to transmit certified copies of the resolution to the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker, the Chair and members of the Levy Legislative Delegation, members of the Florida Congressional Delegation, the Florida Department of Health and the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

**PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED** this 7<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2016.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF LEVY COUNTY, FLORIDA**

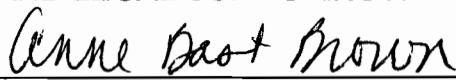
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John Meeks, Chairman

**ATTEST:**

Danny J. Shipp, Clerk of the Circuit  
Court and Ex Officio Clerk to the  
Board of County Commissioners

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Danny J. Shipp, Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

  
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Anne Bast Brown, County Attorney

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