

The cost of the proposed rule's offset requirements are estimated to be \$142 million within the first five years of the rule's implementation, which includes completion of a large-scale regional water recharge project (Water First North Florida) over an estimated 13-year period.¹⁹¹ While other projects may be implemented at the election of individual permittees, DEP included the Water First North Florida project cost as the sole offset cost as the project is anticipated to address the impacts associated with all water uses.¹⁹²

Regulatory Cost to Agencies

The proposed rule will require SJRWMD and SRWMD to incorporate the proposed regulatory requirements into all water use permits issued in the NFRWSP area.¹⁹³ SJRWMD and SRWMD will provide financial assistance for projects and measures identified in the implementation strategy.¹⁹⁴ SJRWMD is required to provide at least 25 percent of total project costs unless other funding sources provide more than 75 percent.¹⁹⁵ SRWMD is not subject to this requirement.¹⁹⁶

SJRWMD intends to implement the proposed rule with existing staff and meet its statutory requirements through participation in the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project, the Water First North Florida project, and the Florida Water Star Silver Plus water conservation project.¹⁹⁷ SJRWMD's financial contribution to Water First North Florida will be limited to the share of impacts to the MFL compliance points resulting from water withdrawals in the SJRWMD region, estimated at \$100–125 million.¹⁹⁸

SRWMD has identified the potential need to expand their workforce by one full-time equivalent position for the first five years of the proposed rule's implementation.¹⁹⁹ Additionally, SRWMD's existing cost-share programs are anticipated to assist agricultural producers in implementing monitoring cost. The funding for these programs comes from state grant programs. The total estimated indirect cost to SRWMD for the new position and cost-share programs is between \$1,975,050 and \$11,712,476.²⁰⁰

Regulatory Costs to Small Cities, Small Counties, and Small Businesses

Small cities are estimated to incur total costs between \$1,545,415 and \$1,608,996 within the first five years of rule implementation.²⁰¹ These estimates are based on a review of existing permits and 2020 Census population data identifying small city permittees in the NFRWSP planning area.²⁰² Costs to the small cities will vary based on the permit allocation and type, and include the cost to implement the conservation requirements, including achieving per capita goals (for Public Supply permittees), implementing specific elements required in their water conservation plans, and reporting on the effectiveness of their water conservation plans.²⁰³ Most costs are

¹⁹¹ *Id.* at 33. Water First North Florida is a planned 40 mgd project that will treat reclaimed water from JEA's Buckman and Southwest water reclamation facilities through wetland systems, provide regional recharge to the Floridan aquifer, and, when fully implemented, has the potential to increase flows to the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee rivers. The project is in the planning phase, with wetland treatment and recharge site investigations underway. Total estimated construction costs are approximately \$1.1 billion, excluding land acquisition, permitting, and operation and maintenance costs. *Id.* at 32-33.

¹⁹² *Id.* at 33.

¹⁹³ *Id.*

¹⁹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁹⁷ *Id.* at 33-34. Regarding Water First North Florida, SJRWMD intends to participate by contributing to the planning, design, construction and/or operation and maintenance of the project. In addition to direct cost-share, SJRWMD may meet the financial assistance requirement through land acquisition or in-kind services. *Id.*

¹⁹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰⁰ *Id.*

²⁰¹ *Id.* at 37. "Small city" means any municipality that has an unincarcerated population of 10,000 or less according to the most recent decennial census. *Id.* at 35; [Section 120.52\(18\), F.S.](#)

²⁰² DEP, Statement of Estimated Regulatory Costs-Summary of SERC Economic Assessment: Rule 62-42.300, F.A.C.: Attachment A (Oct. 2, 2025), available at <https://floridadep.gov/owper/water-policy/documents/attachment-lsfir-serc-summary-serc-economic-assessment> at 36-37.

²⁰³ *Id.* at 37.