

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-14

A RESOLUTION OF THE NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL OPPOSING THE WATER FIRST NORTH FLORIDA AQUIFER RECHARGE PROJECT AND RECOMMENDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE WATER DESALINIZATION PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Floridan Aquifer, Ichetucknee River, Santa Fe River and 116 freshwater springs are designated as Natural Resources of Regional Significance by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, in the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan; and

WHEREAS, the water quality of the freshwater springs, rivers and the Floridan Aquifer is critical to the economic vitality of eco-tourism, agriculture and recreation in the north central Florida region; and

WHEREAS, the lowering of the potentiometric surface of the Floridan Aquifer by water users located outside of the north central Florida region has contributed to lower flows and levels in the Lower Santa Fe River Basin and Ichetucknee River Basin; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes the importance of achieving minimum flows and levels in the Lower Santa Fe River Basin and Ichetucknee River Basin as necessary to protect north central Florida region natural resources and the Council's interest in maintaining a high quality of life for its citizens and enjoyment of the area for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida local water sources first policy suggests that water users located outside of the north central Florida region should develop alternative water supplies, such as desalination; and

WHEREAS, the Water First North Florida Aquifer Recharge Project would discharge 40 million gallons per day of treated wastewater from outside the north central Florida region into the Floridan Aquifer in either Baker County, Bradford County, Columbia County, Hamilton County or Union County in the north central Florida region.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing, BE IT RESOLVED by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council that:

1. The Council opposes the Water First North Florida Aquifer Recharge Project.
2. The Council recommends the Florida Legislature, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Suwannee River Water Management District and the St. Johns River Water Management District re-evaluate the alternative local water sources first desalination project for water users located outside of the north central Florida region as a means to contribute towards achieving minimum flows and levels in the Lower Santa Fe River Basin and Ichetucknee River Basin.

RESOLVED this 26th day of March 2026, by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, in regular session.

Attest:

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA  
REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

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Scott R. Koons, Executive Director

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Mary C. Alford, Chair