

RESOLUTION 26-XX

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA TO RECOMMEND SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES TO RESTORE FLOW TO THE LOWER SANTA FE AND ICHETUCKNEE RIVERS AND SPRINGS

WHEREAS, the 2025 North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan (NFRWSP) outlines the need for an additional 135 million gallons of water a day to accommodate one million new residents by 2045; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County recognizes the importance of restoring flows to the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers and Priority Springs (LSFIR); and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Implementation Strategy for the LSFIR is dependent on successful implementation of the Water First North Florida project to achieve recovery as currently adopted; and

WHEREAS, the public has widely communicated a multitude of concerns with the Water First North Florida Project, including water quality, cost, and schedule; and

WHEREAS, further exploration of the Water First North Florida Project should focus on documenting the level of pre-treatment necessary to safely recharge the aquifer to reassure the public; and

WHEREAS the LSFIR is already in recovery and needs restoration now, and the Water First North Florida Project, if successfully implemented, would not provide relief to the region until 2040 at the earliest; and

WHEREAS, reducing future and current groundwater demand through conservation is the most cost-effective and immediate approach for meeting the MFLs now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, landscape irrigation accounts for up to 60% of residential water use and the trend of permanent landscape irrigation in new construction has greatly increased annual water use over time; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County has committed significant staff time and resources to implement strong landscape irrigation design standards since 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Water Management Districts should reconsider the comments and recommendations provided by Alachua County throughout the LSFIR update outlined below; and