



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

March 23, 2018

Secretary Kenneth W. Detzner
Secretary of State
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

FILED
2018 MAR 29 PM 4:45
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Dear Secretary Detzner:

By the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Florida, under the provisions of Article III, Section 8, of the Constitution of Florida, I do hereby approve House Bill 7043, enacted during the 120th Session of the Legislature of Florida, during the Regular Session of 2018 and entitled:

An act relating to State Assumption of Federal Section 404 Dredge and Fill Permitting Authority...

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is absolutely dedicated to ensuring the wellbeing and protection of Florida's environment. A large part of their duties is to also eliminate duplicity in permitting while upholding and improving our stringent environmental protection standards. This often requires a review of processes with the federal government to ensure that taxpayers are being served properly while our environment is protected. Having two levels of government issue permits for the same activity is often burdensome and can create confusion and uncertainty while doing nothing more to protect our pristine environment.

Currently, with regards to wetlands permitting, there are two processes - an Environmental Resource Permit administered by the state and a Section 404 permit administered by the federal government. This bill gives the Department of Environmental Protection the authority to undertake rulemaking to explore whether the state should issue 404 permits, as is the case in New Jersey and Michigan. The signing of this bill makes no changes to the permitting process that is currently in place. HB 7043, which passed overwhelmingly with bipartisan support in both chambers of the Legislature, simply begins a public evaluation to identify ways we can continue to protect our environment while improving the Department of Environmental Protection's permitting process.

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The Department of Environmental Protection's rulemaking process is done with public input and scrutiny. Also, the Department of Environmental Protection must demonstrate that their permitting program's standards are just as stringent, if not more stringent, than what is in place currently with the federal government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", with a large, sweeping initial "R" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rick Scott
Governor