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Governor Ron DeSantis Requests \$625 Million in Recurring Funds for Everglades Restoration and Protection of Water Resources

The Governor also seeks to increase fines for environmental crimes by 50 percent across the board

Naples, Fla. - Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced his request to the Florida Legislature of \$625 million in recurring funding for the next three years for Everglades restoration and protection of Florida's water resources. This funding will meet the \$2.5 billion goal outlined in the Governor's Bold Vision for a Brighter Future budget. The Governor was joined by First Lady Casey DeSantis, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Noah Valenstein, Senator Rob Bradley, Senator Kathleen Passidomo and Representative Dane Eagle.

The Governor also announced his support for legislation to increase fines for environmental crimes by 50 percent across the board. The legislation will also empower DEP to assess daily fines until the environmental harm has been remedied or a plan has been developed in partnership with DEP to address the issue.

"Since day one, it has been a top priority of my administration to protect our environment and find innovative solutions to the environmental issues facing our state," **said Governor DeSantis**. "This historic funding is key to the success of our fight to protect our environment and water resources, which are the foundation of Florida's economy and way of life. A hardline increase in fines across the board sends a clear message to those who would pollute our state's natural resources – Florida will not stand for it."

"These historic steps to protect our environment and water quality underline a strong focus by Governor DeSantis to safeguard Florida's natural resources," **said DEP Secretary Noah Valenstein**. "The increase of fines will provide an additional tool to enforce the environmental laws we have on the books."

“Florida’s natural resources are a key component to the identity of our state and to the way of life of so many Floridians,” **said Senator Rob Bradley**. “The announcements made today by Governor DeSantis will ensure the protection and conservation of our environment for generations to come. I was happy to join him and the First Lady today and I look forward to working together to accomplish these goals.”

“Last legislative session was a resounding victory for the future of Florida’s environment,” **said Senator Kathleen Passidomo**. “The Governor has been relentless in his initiative to protect our environment and the Legislature will continue to work closely with his administration to ensure a better Florida for all.”

“Floridians across our state understand how crucial our environment and water quality is to our way of life,” **said Representative Dane Eagle**. “These initiatives by the Governor, working effectively with our legislature, will play a critical role in the protection of our environment, our economy and our livelihoods in Southwest Florida.”

“The amount of momentum Governor has been able to rally behind environmental causes over the past 9 months has been incredible,” **said Rob Moher, President and CEO of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida**. “There’s still much to be done to face the challenges ahead but working with leaders across our state I’m confident our focus on science-based solutions will lead to a better, cleaner environment for all Floridians.”

As part of the \$625 million the law will require:

- At least \$300 million for Everglades Restoration and the EAA Reservoir project
- \$50 million for springs restoration
- \$50 million for Total Maximum Daily Load projects (TMDLs) to ensure water bodies throughout the state have appropriate nutrient levels
- \$15 million for projects within the St. Johns River, Suwannee River and Apalachicola River watersheds
- \$10 million for Coral Reef protection and restoration.
- The remainder of the \$625 million will be appropriated for other water quality, alternative water supply, and water conservation projects, including innovative technologies for nutrient reduction and harmful algal bloom prevention and mitigation.