FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
Environmental Protection

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3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Jay Collins
Lt. Governor

Alexis A. Lambert
Secretary

November 13, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC COPY

Michael A. Register, P.E.
Executive Director
St. Johns River Water Management District
P.O. Box 1429
Palatka, FL 32178-1429

Dear Mr. Register,

Thank you for your submittal of the District's 2027 Draft Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program (Work Program), which was prepared pursuant to the requirements of Section 373.536(6)(a)4, F.S. The Department's review of the Work Program must include an evaluation of:

- the work program's consistency with the furtherance of the District's approved regional water supply plans, and
- the adequacy of the proposed expenditures.

In reviewing the Work Program, we documented the progress made on projects to be consistent with the District's Regional Water Supply Plans (RWSPs). The Department commends you for your coordination with Suwannee River Water Management District, along with other stakeholders, in amending the North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership RWSP to include the 2025 Implementation Strategy for the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers and Priority Springs minimum flows and levels (MFLs). Additionally, we note that the work to update the Central Springs/East Coast RWSP continues and is anticipated to be completed in 2027. The Department recognizes the District's commitment to developing alternative water supply and water conservation projects, as demonstrated by the four ongoing cost share programs, as well as your commitment to develop projects associated with the implementation of MFLs, recovery or prevention strategies and water reservations.

In addition to reviewing the implementation strategy, the Department also reviewed the Work Program to determine the adequacy of proposed expenditures. We recognize that several factors beyond the District's control limit this evaluation, including:

- The fiscal information provided in the Work Program only covers five fiscal periods and does not encompass the 20-year planning period of the District Water Supply Plan.
- The statutory budget development and review process influences future proposed expenditures, and the outcomes of processes such as legislative review, public comment, Governor's approval, and District Governing Board adoption of a final budget cannot be predicted.
- The development timeline for water supply projects, including alternative water supply projects, may extend beyond the time horizon of the current Work Program.
- Business decisions of local water suppliers may independently influence District decisions on developing specific water supply projects.

The District's proposed expenditures for water resource, water supply and alternative water supply development programs for Fiscal Year 2026-27 is $33.3 million, and for the five-year planning period is $165.8 million. The District shows a strong commitment to water resource and water supply development through the projects outlined in the Work Program, which are estimated to make approximately 66.01 million gallons per day (mgd) of water, including reuse and non-reuse, available upon completion. Furthermore, the projects benefiting MFLs are anticipated to make available nearly 14.51 mgd of reuse and non-reuse water to benefit waterbodies with approved recovery or prevention strategies.

Therefore, recognizing the review limitations expressed above, the Department has determined that the proposed expenditures described in the District's 2027 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program reasonably contribute to meeting future water supply needs.

We look forward to working with you as you continue to implement and develop your Regional Water Supply Plans.

Sincerely,

Edward C. Smith Digitally signed by Edward C. Smith
Date: 2026.11.13 13:53:28 -05'00'

Edward C. Smith
Director, Office of Water Policy and Ecosystems Restoration
Department of Environmental Protection

cc: Pamela Flores, DEP