

RESOLUTION 030435
PASSED October 13, 2003

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, OPPOSING CREATION OF A STATE-WIDE WATER AUTHORITY, PRIVITIZATION OF WATER RIGHTS, AND THE TRANSPORT OF NORTH FLORIDA WATER RESOURCES TO CENTRAL AND SOUTH FLORIDA; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Florida's springs, aquifers, rivers, creeks, streams, lakes, wetlands, and estuaries are among the most precious resources of this State, and provide immeasurable natural, recreational, and economic values and benefits for residents; and

WHEREAS, Florida's natural and cultural heritage and identity are vitally linked to these special waters; and

WHEREAS, North Florida is home to awe-inspiring, world class springs that include Itchetucknee, Fanning, Manatee, Ginnie, Poe, Silver, Alexander, Juniper, and Wakulla Springs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Environmental Protection created the Florida Springs Initiative, supported by the Legislature and Governor, to protect our springs from such serious threats as excessive water withdrawal; and

WHEREAS, North Florida is home to such majestic rivers as the Suwannee, St. Johns (an American Heritage River), and Santa Fe Rivers; the Silver, Yellow, and Blackwater Rivers; and the Apalachicola, Aucilla, Ocklawaha, Wakulla, Wacissa, and Itchetucknee Rivers; and

WHEREAS, North Florida's rivers are each beautiful and unique, ranging from spring-fed crystal blue to tannic tea-colored waters, from fern-covered limestone bluffs and grottoes to cypress and tupelo overflow swamps, from white sugar-sand banks to black rush and sawgrass marshes; and

WHEREAS, unplanned growth, lack of planning and funding for local alternative water sources, the over-allocation and withdrawal of water supplies, and wasteful water use practices have contributed to water shortages throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, the continued overpumping of our springs, surface waters, and aquifers will have disastrous effects in the form of water pollution, injury to ecosystems and wildlife, increased navigational risks to boaters, reduced access, enjoyment, and value of waterfront properties, risk to properties from sinkhole formations, loss of public recreational opportunities, and harm to shellfish industries, fish camps (on Orange Lake and elsewhere), and other water-dependent local businesses; and

WHEREAS, the plans to privatize and pipe away North Florida waters are contrary to State water law, embodied in Sections 373.016, 373.0361, 373.042, and 373.0421, Florida Statutes, policies of the State Comprehensive Plan, in Section 187.201, Florida Statutes, to encourage the use of “local sources first,” such as desalination, conservation, and reuse; establish minimum flows and levels for water bodies; to reserve from use that water necessary to protect navigation, recreation, public lands, natural resources, river systems, wildlife, freshwater fish and marine life; and to maintain the environment as primary economic asset for the enjoyment of visitors and residents; and

WHEREAS, the plans to privatize and pipe away North Florida waters are contrary to the objectives of the Florida Springs Initiative, the St. Johns American Heritage River Initiative, and the legislatively adopted plan “Connecting Florida’s Communities,” prepared by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Greenways Coordinating Council, and are irreconcilably in conflict with the best interests of this State, its people, and its wildlife and environment; and

WHEREAS, the states of Florida, Georgia, and Alabama are involved in negotiation and litigation with regard to the allocation of water resources, and Florida will be in a stronger position in these discussions if it implements a sound water resources strategy; and

WHEREAS, Florida’s springs, aquifers, rivers, creeks, streams, lakes, wetlands, and estuaries should not be viewed as mere commodities, but must be held in public trust for present and future generations to enjoy abundant wildlife, scenic beauty, recreation, navigation, and for cultural heritage, tourism, and economic vitality; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA:

Section 1. The City Commission of the City of Gainesville holds and supports as basic principles:

- a. The City Commission is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Gainesville and is committed to the long-term availability of clean, abundant, and affordable drinking water in the region.
- b. Any additional strains on our current water supply could negatively affect future needs in our region and lead to unacceptable environmental impacts based on projected future withdrawal rates.
- c. Springs, aquifers, rivers, creeks, streams, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, and waters are public resources.
- d. Water must be clean and safe.
- e. Our springs, aquifers, rivers, creeks, streams, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, and waters must be preserved and managed with the utmost appreciation and consideration for their intrinsic value, for their capacity to sustain abundant wildlife, and for their capacity to provide recreation, enjoyment, and livelihood for future generations.

Section 2. The City Commission of the City of Gainesville opposes the creation of a new state water board or any change in water resource management law that would facilitate privatization of water supplies and state lands, or the long distance redistribution of water resources.

Section 3. The City Commission of the City of Gainesville, in a gesture of good will, supports the implementation of land use planning and growth management that is sustainable and takes into account the carrying capacity of the water supply within each region.

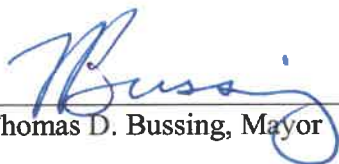
Section 4. The City Commission of the City of Gainesville supports the enforcement and strengthening of State Water Policy to protect our water resources by requiring the use of "local sources first," including water conservation, reuse, and alternative technologies such as desalination.

Section 5. The positions stated in this Resolution shall form a part of the state legislative agenda of the City of Gainesville.

Section 6. The City Manager be and is hereby directed to broadly distribute copies of this Resolution to the Governor of Florida, the Florida Legislature, the Executive Directors and Governing Boards of the St. Johns River, Suwannee River, and Northwest Florida Water Management Districts, the Florida Association of Counties, Florida League of Cities, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and to any other citizens and organizations having an interest in the subject matter of this Resolution.

Section 7. This Resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 13th day of October, 2003.


Thomas D. Bussing, Mayor

ATTEST:


Kurt W. Lannon
Clerk of the Commission

(SEAL)

Approved as to form and legality.

By: 
City Attorney