

CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY



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Bill Type and Number: Ordinance 2025-685

Introducer/Sponsor(s): Council President at the request of the Mayor

Date of Introduction: September 9, 2025

Committee(s) of Reference: JWC, R, TEU, F

Date of Analysis: September 5, 2025

Type of Action: Appropriation; waiver of ordinance code

Bill Summary: This bill appropriates \$112,962 from the Environmental Protection Fund to provide funding for the Eighteenth State of the River Report for the Lower St. Johns River Basin, as initiated by B.T. 25-117. The bill waives Sections 111.755 and 360.602 of the Ordinance Code to authorize use of the Environmental Protection Fund for continued funding of the annual report, waives Section 118.107 to allow for a direct contract with Jacksonville University, and invokes the exemption in Section 126.108(g) to exempt the contract from competitive solicitation. The legislation authorizes execution of an agreement with Jacksonville University, provides for carryover into Fiscal Year 2025-2026, requires annual reports, and assigns oversight to the Environmental Quality Division of the Neighborhoods Department.

Background Information: The purpose of this legislation is to fund preparation of the Eighteenth State of the River Report, which provides a comprehensive scientific analysis of the health and condition of the Lower St. Johns River Basin. Since 2008, the report has been published annually as part of the River Accord initiative, a collaboration among stakeholders committed to addressing the River's immediate needs and ensuring its long-term health. The project is led by Jacksonville University in collaboration with Penn State Berks and the University of North Florida. In addition to publishing the full report, Jacksonville University will produce a one-page brochure summarizing the findings for the general public. The Jacksonville Environmental Protection Board approved the expenditure during its July 21, 2025 meeting. Because the Environmental Protection Fund is limited to one-time projects, the legislation includes waivers to authorize continued use of the fund for annual reports. A direct contract with Jacksonville University is justified because it serves as the principal investigator, has led six consecutive editions of the report, and maintains access to the necessary data and website for the project.

Policy Impact Area: Environmental

Fiscal Impact: This bill appropriates \$112,962 from the Environmental Protection Fund.

Analyst: Jimenez