

CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY



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Bill Type and Number: Resolution 2020-0736

Introducer/Sponsor(s): Council Member DeFoor

Date of Introduction: November 24, 2020

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

Date of Analysis: November 24, 2020

Type of Action: Supporting JEA efforts to address surface discharge elimination; directing Legislative Services to forward this resolution to appropriate offices upon adoption

Bill Summary: The Resolution demonstrates the Council's desire to stand in support of JEA in their efforts to address surface discharge elimination and encourages the Legislature, in considering any future legislation in the 2021 Legislative Session, regarding surface discharge elimination to allow input from the public and private utilities which would be impacted by such legislation and to implement a more extensive timeframe with an expanded phased schedule to allow for legacy utilities, and those utilities which serve large geographical areas and would need to be retrofitted, and given adequate time to comply with any state mandated legislative changes.

Background Information: The City, through JEA, actively invests in technology to result in effluent below the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's total maximum discharge limitations and subsequent Basin Management Action Plan. JEA has recognized potable reuse to be an alternative water supply and included use of potable reuse water in the development of its Integrated Water Resource Plan. JEA treats approximately 80 million gallons of wastewater per day, of which 20 million gallons a day is beneficially reused, to include irrigation and wetland regeneration. JEA has developed a capital strategy to build or upgrade 7 wastewater treatment facilities within the next 5 years to continue to process wastewater to meet reclaim/irrigation/ecological standards. Legislation was proposed in the 2020 State Legislative Session (SB 1656 and HB 715) which would eliminate surface water discharge of effluent within a proposed timeline that would have been financially and technically untenable for JEA and would place a major burden on rate payers. A study commissioned by JEA estimated the cost of implementation under the proposed timeline at greater than \$1 billion and necessary and valuable capital improvements for the Water/Wastewater System would have been reduced in scope or held in abeyance in order to accommodate the proposed timeline. Due to the age of existing infrastructure, as well as the geography and hydrogeology of JEA service territory, JEA will be required to use expensive alternatives such as aquifer recharge and deep well injection. Nevertheless, JEA continues to expand its reclaimed water transmission, distribution and storage systems and increase its production of reclaimed water each year. It is expected that the Legislature will again consider legislation which would address the surface discharge elimination concept in the 2021 Legislative Session. JEA supports the intent of the prior legislation to address surface discharge elimination and continues to implement the reuse of reclaimed water to the maximum extent technologically, economically and environmentally feasible but urges the Legislature in the future to consider extended timeframes for surface discharge elimination to avoid significant challenges due to the complexity and financial impacts of such requirements. At the JEA Board of Directors meeting held on November 17, 2020, the Board approved action presenting a resolution to the City Council on this topic.

Policy Impact Area: JEA, public utilities, public health and safety

Fiscal Impact: A study commissioned by JEA estimated the cost of implementation of a plan to eliminate surface water discharge of effluent under the proposed timeline of 5 years at greater than \$1,000,000,000.00 (\$1B).

Analyst: Baltiero