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**Representative Hinson and Senator Berman File Safe
Waterways Act**

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – State Representative Yvonne Hayes Hinson (D-Gainesville) and State Senator Lori Berman (D-Delray Beach) recently filed **[HB 393](#)** and **[SB 604](#)**, termed the “Safe Waterways Act.” The legislation will require county health departments to post and maintain warning signs at public bathing places that have been verified impaired for fecal coliform, *Escherichia coli*, or enterococci bacteria by the Florida Department of Health until they meet state water quality standards.

Nearly one million acres of coastal estuaries and nine thousand miles of Florida’s streams and rivers are verified impaired for fecal indicator bacteria, but no statutory requirement exists to inform the public of this threat to their health. Sources of contamination include aging and malfunctioning sewage treatment plants, septic tanks, and animal waste.

Representative Yvonne Hayes Hinson released the following statement:

“Floridians have the right to know if they are swimming in waters deemed unsafe due to substantial levels of fecal contamination. This important piece of legislation notifies the public of a severe health concern that has been ignored by state agencies for years. The required signage will be a constant reminder of the problem while serving as an incentive to accelerate the restoration of Florida’s impaired water bodies. Clean water is vital to the health of our communities, and access goes beyond just drinking water.”

Senator Lori Berman released the following statement:

“At any given time, thousands of Floridians are unknowingly swimming in fecal contaminated waters. The Legislature needs to crack down on wastewater pollution to address this crisis on the front end, but in the interim, Floridians and tourists should be given full transparency. The Safe Waterways Act will protect public health and pressure the state to prioritize water quality restoration in compliance with state regulations.”

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