

## **Restricting Septage Land Application When Advanced Wastewater Treatment Is Nearby**

**[HB 1285](#) – Rep. Shane Abbott (SB 1474 – Sen. Don Gaetz)**

### **General Bill Summary**

CS/CS/HB 1285 addresses the land application of septage as Class B biosolids in Florida. The bill amends state law governing biosolids management to restrict when the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) may issue or renew permits for certain land application sites.

Specifically, the legislation prohibits DEP from issuing or renewing a permit for a land application site that would allow the disposal or land application of septage as Class B biosolids if a qualifying wastewater treatment facility capable of providing a higher level of treatment is located nearby. The restriction applies when such a facility is within 30 miles of the proposed biosolids land application site.

To trigger the prohibition, the nearby wastewater treatment facility must accept septage for higher levels of treatment, be owned or operated by the federal government, a federal agency, a state governmental entity, or a political subdivision of the state, and must not be defunct, repurposed, or operating beyond its capacity.

The bill's intent is to encourage the use of higher-level treatment facilities for septage when reasonably available rather than allowing disposal through land application as Class B biosolids.

The bill passed both chambers unanimously during the 2026 legislative session and was ordered enrolled.

### **Potential County Impact**

The bill may affect counties that operate wastewater treatment facilities, manage septage disposal, or host biosolids land application sites. Counties that own or operate treatment facilities capable of processing septage at higher treatment levels could see increased demand from septic tank pumpers or waste haulers who would otherwise dispose of septage through land application.

Counties hosting existing or proposed biosolids land application sites could see permitting limitations if a qualifying public treatment facility exists within 30 miles. This could reduce or prevent new land application permits in certain areas and shift disposal practices toward centralized wastewater treatment infrastructure.

Operationally, counties operating wastewater treatment facilities that accept septage may need to evaluate treatment capacity, fee structures, and infrastructure needs if additional septage flows are directed to those facilities.

For counties without treatment facilities that accept septage, the bill may increase transportation distances and costs for septic waste haulers and potentially influence regional waste management practices.

The bill does not impose a direct mandate on counties but may indirectly affect county utilities, solid waste programs, and environmental management operations related to wastewater and biosolids disposal.

**Effective Date**

July 1, 2027.

**Primary Statutory References**

- s. 403.0855, F.S.