

# CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT FULL TEXT

**Ballot Title:** FLORIDA WETLANDS PROTECTION AMENDMENT

**Ballot Summary:** Enhances protection for Florida wetlands, both naturally occurring and man-made, by prohibiting the draining, dredging, filling or other degradation of Florida wetlands, thereby preventing harmful effects such actions have on the ecosystems of wetlands, native wildlife, and the environmental health of Florida.

**Article and Section Being Created or Amended:** ARTICLE X, SECTION 33

## Full Text of the Proposed Amendment:

(a) Wetlands are of the utmost importance to Florida's environment and economy. Wetlands are productive systems that purify waters, control floods, provide storm protection, recharge groundwater, and provide wildlife habitats. Wetlands provide essential ecological services to the State of Florida and are more valuable than any other habitat in this respect.

(1) Wetlands, whether naturally occurring or man-made, act as natural filtration systems for water and pollution, making the environmental productivity of wetlands vital to all agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and public uses in the State of Florida.

(2) In order to preserve and protect the property rights of Florida citizens, mechanisms must be established to provide orderly regulation and preservation of environmentally significant and productive wetlands.

(3) The dredging, filling, draining or other degradation of wetlands is hereby prohibited..

(b) For the purposes of this section:

(1) "Degradation" means man-made changes to water quality, quantity, and flow rates, resulting in increased pollution levels, as well as the introduction of non-native species to wetlands ecosystems.

(2) "Draining" means to cause water to run out, leaving it empty, dry, or drier.

(3) "Dredging" means to excavate naturally occurring wetlands.

(4) "Filling" means to deposit material into naturally occurring wetlands.

(5) "Wetlands" means areas of land that have soils that are recurrently saturated with water, so that the presence of water is the dominant factor in the soil chemistry and biology, and the types of plants and animals living in or on its surface.

(c) The dredging, filling, draining or other degradation of wetlands shall be punishable as a felony of the third degree.

(d) If any portion of this section is held invalid for any reason, the remaining portion of this section, to the fullest extent possible, shall be severed from the void proportion and given the fullest possible force and application.

(e) This section is self-executing and shall take effect immediately upon the passage of this amendment by the voters.

## Initiative Information

**Date Approved** 5/20/2021

**Serial Number** 21-04

**Sponsor Name:** FL5.org

**Sponsor Address:** 555 Winderley Place, Suite 300 Maitland, FL 32751