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FL senators back down on the ‘veggie libel’ bill

Language in measure is tossed out after outrage

Stephany Matat
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

After online outrage from conservatives and free speech advocates, Florida senators axed language in a bill that would have given farmers and growers the ability to sue people or groups for “false” statements about their products.

The provision even sparked the ire of MAGA Florida congresswoman Anna Paulina Luna, who has said “Big Ag should be open to public criticism, especially if they are making people sick.”

The debate surrounded legislation (SB 290) filed by Sen. Keith Truenow, R-Tavares, which involved farm equipment, but also would have strengthened what experts call “veggie libel” accusations in favor of farmers and growers.

Florida’s proposal would have become the broadest in the country among

what are known as food disparagement laws and regulations.

Bill sponsors said it was intended to protect farmers and producers by giving them a pathway to sue people for false claims made about their products. But experts say that since science is constantly evolving and changing, “Big Ag” can still sue a person by saying that a claim isn’t yet fully proven to be scientifically true.

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Sen. Keith Truenow stands for the pledge of allegiance during opening day of the Florida legislative session on March 4, 2025.

ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT



The Lake Crago Outdoor Recreation Complex, opened in September 2020, is appearing brown these days because of heavy rusting, which has been left untouched by the city’s parks department, which says it adds a “rustic” element.

PHOTOS BY SARA-MEGAN WALSH/THE LEDGER

Lake Crago’s rust: Eyesore or lovely ‘rustic patina’?

Officials say it adds character to the walkways and buildings

Sara-Megan Walsh Lakeland Ledger | USA TODAY NETWORK

If you’ve visited Lakeland’s Lake Crago Outdoor Recreational Complex lately, it may appear rusted and rundown. Lakeland officials beg to differ.

“It’s a rustic patina,” Bob Donahay, the city’s director of parks, recreation and cultural arts said.

The large swaths of reddish-brown discoloration are clearly visible from the parking lot to the center’s walking paths and metal facade. It’s rust caused by the complex’s irrigation system and water that’s gradually built up since the center opened in September 2020, Donahay said.

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Metal exterior panels along an outdoor portion of the Lake Crago Outdoor Recreational Complex in Lakeland have turned a reddish-brown from severe rusting.

FL executes Ronald Heath for 1989 murder

Jim Turner
NEWS SERVICE OF FLORIDA

TALLAHASSEE – Ronald Heath, 64, was put to death by lethal injection Feb. 10 at Florida State Prison for a 1989 murder outside Gainesville.

Heath was pronounced dead at 6:12 p.m. following a three-drug injection. He was the first inmate executed this year by the state after Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a modern record of 19 death warrants in 2025.

The state action follows the U.S. Supreme Court denying the latest appeals by Heath’s attorneys on Feb. 10.

Last week, the Florida Supreme Court denied Heath’s motion for a stay of execution.

The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops also last week asked DeSantis to commute Heath’s sentence to life in prison without parole. The conference has unsuccessfully made similar requests before executions throughout

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Tom Sheridan, brother of Michael Sheridan, speaks after the execution of Ronald Heath on Feb. 10 at Florida State Prison in Raiford. Heath was found guilty of murdering Michael Sheridan during a stop in Gainesville in 1989. ALAN YOUNGBLOOD/GAINESVILLE SUN

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