

**No.: 25-694**

**IN THE  
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

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**JEFFREY LANCE HILL, SR., etc., Petitioner,**

**v.**

**LEANDRA G. JOHNSON, et al, Respondents.**

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**On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the United  
States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit**

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**PETITION FOR REHEARING**

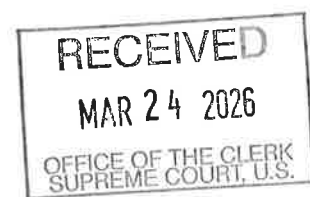
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**Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr., Petitioner pro se**

**908 SE Country Club Road**

**Lake City, Florida 32025**

**Phone: 386-623-9000**



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## PETITION FOR REHEARING

Petitioner Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr. (Hill) respectfully petitions under Rule 44.2 for rehearing of this Court's February 23, 2026, order denying his Petition for Writ of Certiorari, *Hill v. Johnson, et al.*, No.: 25-694. Rehearing is warranted based on intervening circumstances that occurred after the Petition was distributed, but ten days before conference, and additional argument not presented in the Petition for Writ of Certiorari. Appendices to this Petition will be numbered as "RH - \_\_\_\_."

### REASONS FOR GRANTING REHEARING

#### INTERVENING CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Hill's Petition for Writ of Certiorari was distributed for conference of February 20, 2026, on January 28, 2026.
2. On February 10, 2026, Respondent Suwannee River Water Management District's board of directors unanimously voted to sell more than 60 acres of the land which is subject to Hill's Petition, to Respondent City of Lake City, Florida; RH – 1. On February 17, 2026, Hill filed Emergency Application for Stay, to the Clerk of this Court, addressed to the Honorable Justice Clarence Thomas;

RH – 5. Hill’s Applications were sent to the Clerk via FedEx, next day guaranteed, with signature required.

3. On February 25, 2026, this Court’s Clerk returned Hill’s Application for Stay; RH – 2. With the 3 returned Applications, this Court’s Clerk states; “this Court no longer has jurisdiction over your case”; RH – 2.

4. On March 3, 2026, Hill filed the three Applications again to this Court’s Clerk along with a letter to this Court’s Clerk questioning why the Applications were rejected and not promptly transmitted to the Honorable Justice Clarence Thomas as required by Rule 22, Supreme Court Rules; RH – 3.

On March 5, 2026, this Court’s Clerk returned Hill’s Application(s) for Stay again, together with a letter stating; “The Clerk is authorized to reject filings that do not comply with the Rules of Court. See Rule 1.1.”. The Clerk’s March 5, 2026 letter does not state which Rule Hill failed to comply with; RH – 4. Hill could not have asked the lower Court for such relief to stay a sale of his land because Respondent Suwannee River Water Management (District) did not take such action until February 10, 2026. By taking action to sell their ill-gotten land on February 10, 2026, ten days before conference, District shows their insolence to this Honorable Court. Additionally, District foreclosed on

their monetary judgments (in 2015) pursuant to Florida Statute 55.10. The monetary judgments were obtained solely by and through errant judicial opinions. F. S. 55.10 is specifically for a person to foreclose a monetary judgment; the statute is not a vehicle for government to foreclose. District is not a person. Further, District is forbidden by Florida Statute 373.129 (5) (a) from selling land taken via a civil penalty. F.S. 373.129 (5) (a) provides; "A civil penalty recovered by a Water Management District shall be retained and used exclusively by the Water Management District that collected the money". If District sells real property, however illegally obtained, to Respondent City of Lake City, then District will not be retaining and exclusively using that land, violating Florida Statute 373.129(5)(a) (land taken with their \$100,000.00 fine). This Water Management District is not only willing to break Florida law, but is so bold as to intervene into this Court's jurisdiction and power. District practically made the decision for this Court, ten days before conference. It is this level of arrogance that started this entire controversy when District overextended and leveraged its permitting monopoly, demanding Hill obtain a permit to replace a rusted pipe. District can only act with the authority extended to it by the Florida Legislature. The \$100,000.00 fine is void.

5. *Pung v. Isabella County* is currently pending in this Court. The questions presented in *Pung* are related to the questions presented in Hill's Petition for Writ of Certiorari. In its forthcoming opinion, Hill believes this Court will cite numerous cases involving unconstitutional takings, which will demonstrate direct conflict with the Eleventh Circuit's opinion and this Court's Takings Jurisprudence. Rehear should be granted because this is a very large taking of real property (a family farm) by state government (more than 100 acres of private property) without just compensation. Without review, the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit's opinion, page 5, gives the subject property to Respondents City of Lake City and Smallridge. Hill prays this Court grant Rehearing, grant Stay and Grant, Vacate and Remand in Hill's Petition for Writ of Certiorari No.:25-694.

#### CONCLUSION

The Petition for Rehearing should be granted.

Respectfully submitted on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March,  
2026; Jeffrey L. Hill, Sr.  
Jeffrey Lance Hill, Petitioner pro se; 908 SE  
Country Club Road, Lake City, Florida 32025  
Phone: 386-623-9000

**CERTIFICATE OF UNREPRESENTED PARTY**

I hereby certify that this petition for rehearing is presented in good faith and not for delay, and that it is restricted to the grounds specified in Supreme Court Rule 44.2.

 Jeffrey L. Hill, Sr., Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr.

No.: 25-694

**In the Supreme Court of the United States**

**On petition for a writ of Certiorari to the United States  
Court of Appeals for the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit**

**Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr. etc., Petitioner,**

**v.**

**Leandra G. Johnson, et al, Respondents.**

**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

**As required by Supreme Court Rule 33.1 (h), I  
certify that the Petition for Rehearing contains  
733 words, excluding the parts of the document  
that are exempted by Supreme Court Rule 33.1  
(d).**

**I declare under penalty of perjury that the  
foregoing is true and correct.**

**Executed on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026.**

; Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr.  
**Petitioner pro se**

**908 SE Country Club Road, Lake City, Florida  
32025; Phone: 386-623-9000**

No.: 25-694

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

JEFFREY LANCE HILL, Sr., etc., Petitioner,

v.

LEANDRA G. JOHNSON, *et al*, Respondents.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Pursuant to Rule 29, Supreme Court Rules, I hereby certify that on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2025, true and correct copies of the foregoing Application for Stay have been furnished to all counsels of record, by U.S. Mail, postage prepaid, to the following Respondents on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026: Timothy L. Newhall, attorney for Respondents Johnson, Parker & Williams; at 400 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 – Dale A. Scott, attorney for Respondent Columbia County, at 2707 East Jefferson Street, Orlando, Florida 32803 – Jennifer B. Springfield, Respondent at 2638 SW 118<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Gainesville, Florida 32601 – David C. Willis, attorney for Respondent Suwannee River Water Management District, at P.O. Box 1873, Orlando, Florida 32802 – Susan S. Erdelyi, attorney for Respondents Foreman, City of Lake City, and Smallridge at 1200 Riverplace Blvd., Suite 800, Jacksonville, Florida 32207. All parties required to be served have been served.

Executed on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

In compliance with 28 U.S.C. section 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury the above is true and correct: Jeffrey L. Hill, Sr., Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr., Petitioner, 908 SE Country Club Road, Lake City Florida 32025; Phone: 386-623- 9000.

## APPENDIX CONTENTS

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RH-1

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT  
**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Governing Board

FROM: Katelyn Potter, Director, Division of Outreach  
and Operations

THRU: Hugh Thomas, Executive Director

DATE: February 10, 2026

RE: Resolution 2026-02, Conveyance of District-Owned  
Lake City Wellfield and Country Club Road Tracts to  
City of Lake City

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Resolution 2026-02, conveying the Lake City  
Wellfield and Country Club Road tracts owned by the  
District to the City of Lake City.

**BACKGROUND**

In May 2021, the District purchased approximately  
1,100 +/- acres in Columbia County for the purpose of  
providing a location for a potable water supply for the  
City of Lake City, known as the Lake City Wellfield.  
The purchase was made through the District's Local  
Government Assistance Program. Since that time, the  
City of Lake City has built a wellfield and a potable  
water plant on the tract pursuant to a lease agreement  
with the District.

A number of access and utility easements exist across  
the Lake City Wellfield Tract to service the wells and  
the water plant. Weyerhaeuser maintains timber  
rights on approximately 333 acres of the tract which

RH-1 continued

expire in 2030. The District also actively manages other parts of the site for timber resources. However, the site is closed to the public and not considered a conservation property due to its purchase and function as wellfield. In January 2026, City of Lake City requested that the District convey the Lake City Wellfield Tract to assume control of the wellfield and potable water plant. Additionally, the City of Lake City requested conveyance of the Country Club Road tracts to implement a water recharge project on the Northern Parcel. The conveyance includes \$157,250 for the Southern Tract, which is the appraised value.

Resolution 2026-02 includes the following recommendations.

1. Conveyance of the Lake City Wellfield Tract to the City of Lake City subject to the reservations as set out below
  - a. Ownership will revert to the District should the land use become inconsistent with a wellfield,
  - b. The District reserves the timber rights on approximately 423 acres of the Lake City Wellfield along with an easement to access the timber,
  - c. The conveyance is subject to Weyerhaeuser's reserved timber rights.
2. Termination of Lease Agreement #03/04-290, between the City of Lake City and the District on Lake City Wellfield as it will no longer be needed.

RH-1 continued

3. Conveyance of the Country Club Road Tracts to City of Lake City for \$157,250, and a reverter subject to the agreement below.
4. Agreement between the District and City of Lake City requires that an unpermitted structures be permitted and any required modifications be completed by no later than September 30, 2027; and the City of Lake City will not allow any structures to impound water to any greater extent than it currently does, unless otherwise permitted. Upon successful completion of the agreement, the District will release the reverter contained on the deed to the Country Club Road Tract.
5. Authorizes the Executive Director to negotiate terms necessary to close the transaction including providing studies, offering permitting support, and other due diligence not to exceed his signature authority.

These conveyances are consistent with 373.056, Florida Statutes, which authorizes transfers of District land to other public agencies where it is found to be in the public interest and does not require noticing.

Maps of the properties to be conveyed are attached.

KCP/ao

File #008-00608

RH-2

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
WASHINGTON, DC 20543-0001

February 25, 2026

Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr.  
908 SE Country Club Road  
Lake City, FL 32025

RE: Hill v. South River Water Management District  
Application for Stay pending certiorari

No: 25-694

Dear Mr. Hill, Sr.:

Your application for stay postmarked February 17, 2026, and received February 19, 2026 is herewith returned for the following reason(s):

You failed to comply with Rule 23.3 of the Rules of this Court which requires that you first seek the same relief in the appropriate lower courts and attach copies of such orders from the lower courts denying the relief sought to your application filed in this Court. You do not include the order(s) of the lower court's denial of a stay. Furthermore, your petition for a writ of certiorari was denied February 23, 2026; therefore, this Court no longer has jurisdiction over your case.

Sincerely, Scott S. Harris, Clerk

By: /s/ Kyle R. Ratliff

(202) 479-3029

Note: Error in title, 'South River' is Suwannee River

In the Supreme Court of the United States

Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr., Petitioner,

v.

Leandra G. Johnson, et al, Respondents.

To: Kyle R. Ratliff

From: Petitioner Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr. (Hill)

Re: Emergency Application for Stay


1. Hill filed application for stay on February 17, 2026, addressed to the Honorable Clarence Thomas.
2. On March 2, 2026, Hill received a letter dated February 25, 2026, signed by Kyle R. Ratliff, acting on behalf of the Honorable Scott S Harris, Clerk of the United States Supreme Court. Ratliff's letter states: "your petition for writ of certiorari was denied by the Court on February 23, 2026; therefore , this Court no longer has jurisdiction over your case". Rule 44, Supreme Court Rules, provides 25 days for Rehearing a Petition for Certiorari.
3. Rule 22, Supreme Court Rules, provides that Hill's application for stay was to be transmitted to the Honorable Clarence Thomas. The application(s) were returned to Hill without transmittal (with Ratliff's letter).
4. Hill believes the decision to entertain (or not entertain) the application for stay must be made by the individual justice to which the application is addressed, see rule 23, Supreme Court Rules. Please

RH – 3 continued

find enclosed herewith Hill's Emergency Application for Stay to be transmitted promptly to the Honorable Justice Clarence Thomas. Hill believes a government selling 80 acres of a farm while a petition for review is pending in this Court, is most extraordinary. The government waived their right to respond on or about January 22, 2026.

5. Hill will file a Petition to Rehear on or before March 18, 2026 in this case.

Respectfully submitted on this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2026;

 Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr.  
Petitioner pro se; 908 SE Country Club Road, Lake City,  
Florida 32025; Phone; 386-623-9000.

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
WASHINGTON, DC 20543-0001

March 5, 2026

Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr.

908 SE Country Club Road

Lake City, FL 32025

RE: Hill v. South River Water Management District

Application for Stay pending certiorari

No: 25-694

Dear Mr. Hill, Sr.:

Your application that was received March 5, 2026 is herewith returned for the following reason(s):

For the reasons stated in the Court's letter from February 25, 2026. Once a petition for a writ of certiorari is denied, the Court no longer has jurisdiction over any related applications for stay or injunction.

The Clerk is authorized to reject filings that do not comply with the Rules of Court. See Rule 1.1.

Sincerely, Scot S. Harris, Clerk

By: /s/ Robert Meek

(202) 479-3027

Error in Title: 'South River' should be Suwannee River

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No. 25-694

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IN THE  
Supreme Court of the United States of America

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JEFFREY LANCE HILL, SR,  
Petitioner

v.

LEANDRA JOHNSON, ET AL.,  
Respondents.

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**EMERGENCY APPLICATION TO STAY PROCEEDINGS &  
TRANSACTIONS CONCERNING THE RELEVANT HILL  
PROPERTY PRESENTED TO THE HONORABLE CLARENCE  
THOMAS CONCERNING THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT CASE  
NOW BEFORE THE U.S. SUPREME COURT**

---

Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr.  
Petitioner *pro se*  
908 SE Country Club Road  
Lake City, Florida 32025  
Phone: 386-623-9000

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**STATEMENT**

Since 2006, Petitioner, Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr. (Hill), has been in and out of Court concerning matters of his property, most recently defending his interests in a parcel of land taken over by the Suwannee River Water Management District (District). Every step of the way *a pro se*, he has processed service and he has given their robust legal teams filings providing notice of such activities. One such filing is currently awaiting action in this Court, as there is a post-petition conference on February 20, 2026.

As of February 10, 2026, Doc. 1, the Water Management District wants to sell the parcel in question to the town at a bargain basement rate, devaluing the Hill property that he has skillfully-mastered through intergenerational care that is under threat of being taken without repair, not to mention threat of falling into ill-repair

## Emergency Application for Stay

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without his caregiving. Two days later, Hill—ever vigilant of his property’s protection—immediately informed this court of that memorandum’s transaction. Doc. 2. The judgment of the U.S. Supreme Court may well go in Hill’s favor and a stay will ensure that the jurisdiction is respected and that effectuation of the judgment is possible. An emergency stay set to the commencement of dispute for this property throughout the pendency of all actions in this case is requested of this Court to ensure all is properly deliberated without further injury. Proceeding with the stay will neither harm nor prejudice the other party.

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**ARGUMENT**

**A.) A Stay is Needed to Defray Further Injury to the  
Petitioner and, by Extension Due to the Takings  
Precedents Being Set, to the Nation**

The U.S. Supreme Court typically favors the landowner on the merits, so this Court—the only one able to decide this matter—is being disrespected when legislative or executive bodies proceed with transactions, sales, legislative meetings like town council or water management meetings, or any other action pertaining to property that is in dispute. Rule 23 of the U.S. Supreme Court denotes such a mandate—and that mandate stands here because this Court has the matter before it with issues pertaining to unmeritorious exhaustion, uncompensated eminent domain, and judicial takings of private property. Indeed, in *Stop the Beach Renourishment*, this Court wrote that “[i]t would be

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absurd to allow a state to do by judicial decree what the Takings Clause forbids it to do by legislative fiat...the Takings Clause bars the state from taking private property without paying for it, no matter which branch is the instrument of the taking.” 560 U.S. 702, 714 (2010) (Scalia, J.).

Herein lies that fiat. So, that goes for the district- and city-level legislative branches of governments. Rather than allow for completion of proceedings before dispensing with sales of the parcel property at issue in this case, the District has decided in the midst of legal proceedings to sell the relevant Hill property. The issue is not just with the

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legislative bodies, whence the lower courts have consistently proven that they are not adhering to the remands of this court. This Court has found in favor of the original property

## Emergency Application for Stay

owner in eminent domain cases whilst the inverse in courts like those from the Eleventh Circuit and the State of Florida. Whereas the Hill family has been cooperative with all jurisdictions, beginning at least as far back as the 1966 irrigation collaborative project with the U.S. Soil Conservation Services, state entities like the District are showing that they are not favorable to federal holdings.

A stay is requested for the property against all sales and transactions in order to stave off further injury, forestall setting a precedent of selling property rather than finishing litigation thereon, and disallow the government from more takings without equitable compensation through smoke and mirrors permitting and fines campaigns.

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**B.)The Florida municipalities have historically shown a capacity to provide protection of deeds.**

The city in this case—Lake City (Florida)—can know and has shown to know better. Their ordinances have had several instances where they have expressly made a section in their city code for parcels of land (and their deeds) to be protected during transactional processes.<sup>1</sup> The new guard of city council members may well provide such protection for Hill—a multigenerational land-owner. But they are so adversarial without attention or consideration of the burdens government actions impact on private interests, they are willing to throw the baby out with mere drops of bathwater with a multigenerational family’s land—A family that

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<sup>1</sup> City of Lake City, Florida, Ordinances Sec. 86-104 (1999), Sec. 86-105 (2002), 86-106 (2002), 86-109 (2006),

## Emergency Application for Stay

provides “institutional memory” for the community and a family that has managed the property and all its requirements.

This new generation of the city council may well provide a pathway for one of these ordinances in this case to show to the world that they protect private property interests. Any other property that is not Hill property utilized for such an ordinance at this time would be bad faith in the context of this case. Rather than constantly draining the pond, the District may well have ordered basic maintenance of the property conducted by Hill at the payment of the District or Lake City until this case has been fully resolved. It has not, and the U.S. Supreme Court case is not resolved yet.

## Emergency Application for Stay

The District fairs little better than the City with regard to rulemaking about the Hill property. Their code entrants concerning deeds and deed administration show standards that protect against deed transferal willy nilly in the midst of litigation. In the District's February 10, 2026 memorandum (the Memorandum), they wish to force forward the sale of the land in question in this case and practically give the large parcel of said land to Lake City (Florida) at a bargain basement price of \$157,250. Doc. 1.<sup>2</sup>

As such, the District, the City, and all other parties known and unknown need an adjudicator—the U.S. Supreme Court—to help ensure further injury is allayed from happening in this *Hill v. Johnson* case. And now, due to

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<sup>2</sup> There appears to be another lot involved, too. A private and/or third party may seem to catch a windfall if they purchase the newly formed gerrymandered lot instead of the city.

## Emergency Application for Stay

their Memorandum's proposed actions, it is an emergency that only an order from this Court could forestall. Hill has proven to be communicative about the District and the City, but the respondents do not even have the courtesy to answer a petition at this Court, let alone a letter.

**C.) Other Cases Have Allowed for Stays When Property Is Concerned**

Municipalities that do not wish to continue adversarial relationships with their long-time land-owners have agreed to stay enforcement, and not having it in state court—as arose here in this *Hill v. Johnson* case—may actually prove to be more beneficial if the U.S. Supreme Court makes the determination to stay proceedings and transactions until the ownership of the property has been finally determined. *See*

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Emergency Application for Stay

*Knick v. Twp. of Scott*, 139 S. Ct. 2162 (2019). And the U.S. Supreme Court has provided for a stay even when lower courts have not and even when no other proceedings are present. *San Diegans for the Mt. Soledad National War Memorial v. Paulson*, 548 U.S. 1301 (2006) (Kennedy, J.).

This Court has criticized itself for not sufficiently being permitted to consider important constitutional questions. Justice Kennedy considered this early in his tenure when writing "...we may have to confront the

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constitutional question whether forfeiture is permitted when the owner has committed no wrong of any sort, intentional or negligent." *Austin v. United States*, 509 U.S. 602 (1993) (Kennedy, J, dissenting)..

Stays pending are worth ensuring that the court gets the case right, that it does not necessarily wait for a class to

be created with more property involved,<sup>3</sup> that it is consistent, and reaches as wide a swath of the U.S. populace as possible. And this Court has provided for such stays even against a

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government agency by a private entity. .

Further, this Court has modeled giving other Courts the courtesy of waiting for completion of their proceedings to make determinations. *New Jersey Transit Corporation, et al. v. Colt, et al*, #24-1113 (Petitioner's Request September 11, 2025; Granted September 19, 2025). A courtesy that the District representatives is not providing to

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<sup>3</sup> It appears there may be an inkling of an attempt to form a class with a neighboring lot of the Hills.

## Emergency Application for Stay

the U.S. Supreme Court with their memorandum. And there has even been a moment last term when a stay was issued to wait for orders/opinions from either the lower court or one of the Justices, and in that case it had an even wider swath of implications since millions of lives were affected by such transit—and they responded within a day! *Galette v. New Jersey Transit Corporation*, #24-1021 (Petitioner’s Request September 11, 2025; Granted September 12, 2025); *McMahon, Secretary of Education v. New York, et al.*, #24A1203 (Petitioner’s request and review on the same day: July 14, 2025).

Though of course, sometimes stays slow down the activity by ordering a response by the respondent or the party not requesting the stay. *Abbott v. League of United Latin American Citizens*, 25A608 (Petitioner’s Request November 21, 2025; Granted December 4, 2025). But this Court is known for proceeding with all deliberate speed. And stays

Johnson  
Emergency Application for Stay

have even been granted in a Justice's jurisdiction over their  
dissent. *McMahon, Secretary*

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*of Education v. New York, et al.*, #24A1203 (Petitioners  
request and review on the same day: July 14, 2025).

This case would be in good company with stays that  
are currently in place. *Blanche v. Perlmutter*, #25A478  
(Petitioner requested October 27, 2025; Granted November  
26, 2025).; *Trump v. Orr*, 25A319 (Petitioner requested  
September 19, 2025; Granted November 6, 2025).

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When other branches of government – such as a  
legislative body like a district or town council – proceedings  
have been stayed “without impairing the interim

## Emergency Application for Stay

administration” of relevant applicable laws. *Northern Pipeline Construction Co v. Marathon Pipe Line Company United States*, 458 U.S. 50 (1982) (Brennan, J). In this case, the proceedings have yet to be exhausted. Further, as Justice Douglas, the longest running Associate Justice in history noted, “[a] court of the United States may...grant an injunction to stay proceedings in a State court...where necessary in aid of its jurisdiction, or to protect or effectuate

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its judgments.” *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37, Fn 2 (1971). Should the Court find in favor of Hill after the District has sold it to the city, then the City would be involved in a transaction (and possibly more litigation) they should have never entered.

Indeed, this Court may well already be on their way to establishing a stay based on the letter presented to the

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learned jurists, Doc. 2—for which any consideration thereof the petitioner is eternally grateful.

I. CONCLUSION

The U.S. Supreme Court should stay any and all proceedings, transactions, and activity pertaining to the parcel of land at issue in this case. The land has needs, and

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those needs should be attended to, much in the manner of Hill caring for the property. If this case proceeds equitably, Hill may transfer his land to the next generation of Hills. When the Court reviews the case, perhaps they may well remand in light of the recent holding in *Stop the Beach, Sheetz* (discussed in the petition of this case), or any other relevant case staving off a taking through smoke and mirrors permitting and fines. *Stop the Beach* at 714 (2010) (Scalia, J) ; *Sheetz v. County of El Dorado*, 144 S.Ct. 893 (2024) (Barrett, J.). Farming rights,

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including those for ponds, are very important, and Hill's family has stood the test of time to protect their rural property—whether through tilling the land, irrigating crops, or replacing a culvert.

In the  
United States Court of Appeals  
For the Eleventh Circuit

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No. 23-12231

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JEFFREY LANCE HILL, SR.,  
individually; Aggrieved Party and as Real Party  
in Interest of El Rancho No Tengo, Inc.,

Plaintiff-Appellant,

*versus*

LEANDRA G. JOHNSON,  
individually & officially,  
GREGORY S. PARKER,  
individually & officially,  
WILLIAM F. WILLIAMS, III,  
individually & officially,  
JOEL F. FOREMAN,  
individually and as Columbia County attorney,  
JENNIFER B. SPRINGFIELD, et al.,

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JENNIFER B. SPRINGFIELD, et al.,

Defendants-Appellees.

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Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Middle District of Florida  
D.C. Docket No. 3:20-cv-00895-TJC-PDB

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Before JORDAN, BRANCH, and LUCK, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:

Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr. appeals the district court's dismissal of (1) four of Hill's claims because of judicial immunity, (2) five of Hill's claims under the *res judicata* doctrine, and (3) Hill's final claim for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. All of Hill's claims arise out of a nearly 20-year-old dispute with his local government concerning the maintenance of a reservoir on his property. This appeal is the latest in a long line of suits Hill has filed in state and federal court since this dispute began. After careful review, we affirm in part and remand in part.

### I. Background

Hill brought this lawsuit in 2020 against the Honorable Leandra G. Johnson; the Honorable Gregory S. Parker; the Honorable William F. Williams, III (collectively the "judicial

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defendants”); two Florida attorneys, Joel F. Foreman and Jennifer B. Springfield; Suwannee River Water Management District (“the District”); Columbia County, Florida (“the County”); City of Lake City, Florida (“the City”); and Michael Smallridge (all collectively, “defendants”). Hill’s allegations recount his long-running, litigation-filled dispute with various local-government entities since 2006.

According to Hill’s latest complaint, in 2003 he and his family lived on approximately 800 acres of land in the County, which they operated as a farm via a corporation called El Rancho No Tengo, Inc. The land features a reservoir bounded by dikes. In 2003, the District discovered that an emergency spillway on the reservoir had failed, which resulted in significant flooding and erosion downstream, beyond Hill’s property. The District informed Hill that he must obtain an environmental resource permit (“ERP”) issued by the District to repair the breach, but Hill never sought an ERP.

In 2006, Hill attempted to repair the reservoir and dikes without an ERP. The District sued Hill to stop him, alleging that Hill’s activities rendered the reservoir structurally unsound and subject to failure. In 2007, Judge Johnson awarded the District an injunction that allowed the District to enter Hill’s land and demand an ERP for his construction. Hill unsuccessfully appealed. In 2008, Judge Johnson awarded the District a \$100,000.00 fine against Hill. Hill again unsuccessfully appealed. In 2010, Judge Parker, now overseeing Hill’s case, authorized the District to drain the

reservoir. Hill alleged that the drainage caused water to flow onto 120 acres of his land. Judge Parker also awarded \$280,376.20<sup>1</sup> in fees and costs to the District. Judge Parker ordered the sheriff to place a levy on Hill's land to satisfy the judgment in the District's favor. The sheriff scheduled the sale of Hill's land for May 3, 2011, but Hill filed for bankruptcy immediately beforehand. Hill "obtained no relief in the bankruptcy court," and the District took possession of Hill's land as scheduled on May 3, 2011.

In August 2011, Hill and his wife filed a "land takings case in state court; case no.: 11-340CA." During this litigation, Hill alleges that Springfield, who was an attorney in the case, moved to hold Hill in contempt of court. In 2016, the state court granted summary judgment for the District. Subsequently, Judge Parker "assigned 'all cases involving Plaintiff'" to Judge Williams. Hill alleged that Judge Williams, then "acting as a state circuit judge, denied Plaintiffs' motion to rehear [Judge] Parker's Order which granted judicial immunity to take land to the" District. Hill alleged that the "Parker/Williams decisions as to immunity have been reversed."

In 2017, the County sought a receiver for property which, according to Hill, "belonged to Plaintiff and [h]is son." During this litigation, Hill alleges that Foreman, who served as the County's attorney, filed a false document. Judge Williams, "acting as a state circuit judge in [the] County," granted the County's request,

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<sup>1</sup> In various places, Hill also alleges this figure was \$280,276.20 or \$260,376.20. The precise figure is irrelevant to the outcome of this appeal.

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appointed Smallridge as the County's receiver, and directed Smallridge to assume control over the reservoir and make all necessary repairs. Judge Williams also entered an order allowing the County and the District to enter Hill's property. Thereafter, the City also entered Hill's land to work on the reservoir and surrounding dikes.

In 2019, Smallridge entered Hill's land and performed further work on a water line. Smallridge later returned with employees and installed another water pipe. Then in 2020, Hill alleges that the District entered his property again and drained the reservoir, "allowing the approximately 50 million gallons of water to drain onto Plaintiff's property."

Out of these underlying facts, Hill has initiated multiple federal lawsuits. As relevant to this appeal, in 2015, Hill filed suit against the District in the Middle District of Florida seeking a declaration that the District lacked authority to seek an injunction against him in the 2006 proceedings, that the state court lacked jurisdiction in the 2006 litigation, and that the District violated his federal statutory and constitutional rights. Hill also asked the district court to quiet title to his land. The district court dismissed the action with prejudice because the issues Hill raised in his complaint were "litigated to finality in state court" and barred by

“the doctrines of *res judicata*, collateral estoppel, and *Rooker-Feldman*.”<sup>2</sup>

In 2017, Hill filed another case in the Middle District of Florida against the judicial defendants, Foreman, Springfield, the District, the County, and the City. His allegations and claims in that lawsuit mirror his allegations and claims in this case. The district court dismissed Hill’s complaint with prejudice, finding that “[a]s has been detailed in prior orders entered in Plaintiff’s related cases, Plaintiff’s Complaint fails to state any claim upon which relief can be granted in this Court.” We affirmed. *See Hill v. Johnson*, 787 F. App’x 604, 605 (11th Cir. 2019).

In 2020, Hill filed this lawsuit. He asserted ten claims: (1) a takings claim against Judge Johnson; (2) an excessive-fines claim against Judge Johnson; (3) a takings and due-process claim against Judge Parker; (4) a due-process, takings, and jury-trial claim against Judge Williams; (5) a takings and due-process claim against Foreman; (6) an equal-protection claim against Springfield; (7) a takings claim against the District; (8) a takings claim against the County; (9) a takings claim against the City; and (10) a takings claim against Smallridge.

In 2022, Hill moved to supplement his pleadings. The defendants also moved to dismiss Hill’s complaint. The district

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<sup>2</sup> *See Rooker v. Fid. Tr. Co.*, 263 U.S. 413, 415–16 (1923); *Dist. of Columbia Ct. of Appeals v. Feldman*, 460 U.S. 462, 476–82 (1983).

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court dismissed<sup>3</sup> Hill's complaint with prejudice and denied Hill's motion to file supplemental pleadings. The district court dismissed Counts I through IV based on judicial immunity, Counts V through IX based on *res judicata*, and Count X for lack of subject matter jurisdiction. Hill timely appealed.

## II. Discussion

Hill appeals the applicability of judicial immunity and *res judicata* to his claims. Hill also argues that the district court had subject matter jurisdiction over his final claim. Finally, Hill appeals the district court's denial of his motion to file supplemental pleadings.

### A. *Hill's Counts I through IV are barred by judicial immunity*

The district court dismissed Hill's first four claims based on judicial immunity. On appeal, Hill argues that the judicial defendants' actions in his previous state cases were void and did not confer judicial immunity on the judicial defendants. Specifically, Hill argues that the judicial defendants acted without jurisdiction and cannot be immune from takings claims.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The district court previously dismissed with prejudice Hill's complaint. We vacated and remanded the decision in light of an intervening decision from this Court. *Hill v. Johnson*, No. 21-12271, 2022 WL 3155832 (11th Cir. Aug. 8, 2022); *see also Behr v. Campbell*, 8 F.4th 1206 (2021).

<sup>4</sup> Hill also argues that Judge Williams was not properly appointed as a circuit judge. Thus, according to Hill, Judge Williams lacks judicial immunity for any actions taken as a circuit judge. As we will explain below, this argument fails

“We review *de novo* a district court’s grant of judicial immunity.” *Smith v. Shook*, 237 F.3d 1322, 1325 (11th Cir. 2001). State judges are typically entitled to judicial immunity in suits for money damages. *Stump v. Sparkman*, 435 U.S. 349, 355–56 (1978).

We apply a two-part test to determine whether a state judge is entitled to judicial immunity when sued under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for money damages. *Simmons v. Conger*, 86 F.3d 1080, 1084 (11th Cir. 1996). First, we consider “whether the judge dealt with the plaintiff in a judicial capacity.” *Id.* Determining “judicial capacity depends on whether: (1) the act complained of constituted a normal judicial function; (2) the events occurred in the judge’s chambers or in open court; (3) the controversy involved a case pending before the judge; and (4) the confrontation arose immediately out of a visit to the judge in his judicial capacity.” *Sibley v. Lando*, 437 F.3d 1067, 1070 (11th Cir. 2005). “If the judge was dealing with the plaintiff in his judicial capacity, . . . the second part of the test is whether the judge acted in the clear absence of all jurisdiction.” *Simmons*, 86 F.3d at 1085 (quotations omitted); see *Stump*, 435 U.S. at 357. A judge acts in the clear absence of all jurisdiction if he lacked “subject matter jurisdiction over the matter forming the basis for . . . liability.” *Dykes v. Hosemann*, 776 F.2d 942, 943 (11th Cir. 1985) (*en banc*).

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because Judge Williams was lawfully appointed to temporarily serve as a circuit judge.

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Hill sued the judicial defendants for money damages. Accordingly, we turn to the two-pronged analysis to determine the applicability of judicial immunity. *See Simmons*, 86 F.3d at 1084–85.

First, the judicial defendants acted in their judicial capacity. Hill alleged that the judicial defendants injured him through the following actions: (1) granting a permanent injunction; (2) imposing a \$100,000 penalty against Hill; (3) issuing orders to drain the reservoir and allow water to flow onto Hill's land; (4) imposing \$280,376.20 in fees and costs against Hill; (5) holding Hill in contempt of court and jailing him; (6) issuing a foreclosure judgment to the District; (7) overruling Hill's objections; (8) assigning Hill's cases to Judge Williams; (9) ruling that Hill's land was not unlawfully "taken"; (10) issuing an order allowing the County to take a portion of Hill's land; and (11) issuing other orders. These actions are quintessential judicial functions: granting injunctions, imposing penalties, and issuing orders. *See Sibley*, 437 F.3d at 1070.<sup>5</sup> And as Hill alleged, the judicial defendants undertook these alleged actions in cases pending before them. Accordingly, the judicial defendants meet the first prong for receiving judicial immunity. *See Simmons*, 86 F.3d at 1084.

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<sup>5</sup> Hill also argues that "draining a pond and flooding fields[] isn't part a[n]d parcel of the judicial process, or functionally comparable to the work of judges." (quoting *Hill v. Suwanee River Water Mgmt. Dist.*, 217 So. 3d 1100, 1102 (Fla. 1st DCA 2017)). That argument, however, fails against the judicial defendants who, in this case, engaged only in "the work of judges—making decisions, resolving disputes, adjudicating rights, processing cases, and the like." *Hill*, 217 So. 3d at 1102.

Second, the judicial defendants did not act in the clear absence of all jurisdiction. Hill fails to allege that any of the judicial defendants lacked subject matter jurisdiction over his state-court cases. Indeed, Hill concedes that “circuit courts . . . possess the power to hear” his cases.<sup>6</sup> See Fla. Stat. § 26.012(2)(a), (g) (defining circuit courts’ original jurisdiction to include “all actions at law not cognizable by the county courts” and “all actions involving the title and boundaries of real property”). Accordingly, the district court properly dismissed Hill’s first four claims based on judicial immunity.<sup>7</sup> See *Simmons*, 86 F.3d at 1084–85; *Dykes*, 776 F.2d at 943.

B. *Hill’s Counts V through IX are barred by res judicata*

The district court held that Hill’s fifth through ninth claims were barred by the doctrine of *res judicata*. On appeal, Hill argues that the parties and causes of action are different in this case than in his previous cases, and other courts have not adjudicated his takings claims. Defendants argue that Hill’s 2017 federal suit precludes this suit. We agree with defendants.

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<sup>6</sup> Again, to the extent Hill argues that Judge Williams was not properly appointed to be a circuit judge, we will explain below why that argument fails.

<sup>7</sup> In opposition to this conclusion, Hill argues that judicial immunity is unavailable for takings claims. We find no support for Hill’s position. Although a judicial order may effect a taking, see *Stop the Beach Renourishment, Inc. v. Fla. Dep’t of Env’t Prot.*, 560 U.S. 702, 714 (2010) (plurality opinion), plaintiffs still may not sue judges for money damages when the requirements for judicial immunity are met, see *Simmons*, 86 F.3d at 1084–85.

“At all times the burden is on the party asserting *res judicata* (here, [defendants]) to show that the later-filed suit is barred.” *In re Piper Aircraft Corp.*, 244 F.3d 1289, 1296 (11th Cir. 2001). We apply federal common law “to determine the preclusive effect of a prior federal court judgment.” *Baloco v. Drummond Co., Inc.*, 767 F.3d 1229, 1246 (11th Cir. 2014). Under federal common law, a prior decision prevents plaintiffs from bringing related claims “when the prior decision (1) was rendered by a court of competent jurisdiction; (2) was final; (3) involved the same parties or their privies; and (4) involved the same causes of action.” *Rodemaker v. City of Valdosta Bd. of Educ.*, 110 F.4th 1318, 1324 (11th Cir. 2024) (quotation omitted). As for the second element, dismissals with prejudice and dismissals for failure to state a claim are final judgments on the merits. *NAACP v. Hunt*, 891 F.2d 1555, 1560 (11th Cir. 1990); *Hart v. Yamaha-Parts Distribs., Inc.*, 787 F.2d 1468, 1470 (11th Cir. 1986). As for the fourth element, *res judicata* “extends not only to the precise legal theory presented in the previous litigation, but to all legal theories and claims arising out of the same operative nucleus of fact.” *Hart*, 787 F.2d at 1470 (quotation omitted). We review the district court’s decision on privity for clear error, but we review the remaining elements *de novo*. *Rodemaker*, 110 F.4th at 1327.

All four elements of *res judicata* are present between this suit and Hill’s 2017 federal suit. First, Hill filed the 2017 case in the Middle District of Florida, which was a court of competent jurisdiction concerning Hill’s federal claims arising from a real property dispute within that district. See 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331

(establishing federal-question jurisdiction), 89(b) (defining the Middle District of Florida to include Columbia and Suwannee Counties). Second, the district court dismissed Hill's 2017 complaint with prejudice for failure to state a claim, which is a preclusive final judgment. *See Hunt*, 891 F.2d at 1560; *Hart*, 787 F.2d at 1470. Third, Hill names identical parties in Counts V through IX of this complaint as he did in his 2017 suit: the City, the County, Foreman, Springfield, and the District. Fourth, Hill's claims in Counts V through IX of this complaint involve the same causes of action as his 2017 claims: takings, excessive fines, and due process. In any event, both disputes "aris[e] out of the same operative nucleus of fact"—Hill's fight with local governmental entities over construction at the reservoir. *Hart*, 787 F.2d at 1470 (quotations omitted). Because all four elements for *res judicata* are met, Hill's 2017 suit precludes his Counts V through IX in this suit. *See Rodemaker*, 110 F.4th at 1324.

C. *The district court lacked subject matter jurisdiction over Hill's Count X*

The district court held that it lacked subject matter jurisdiction over Count X, Hill's claim against Smallridge, because Smallridge was a receiver, and the court that appointed Smallridge as a receiver never granted Hill permission to sue Smallridge. On appeal, Hill argues that Judge Williams "was not a duly authorized judge" who could appoint a receiver.

We review a dismissal for lack of subject matter jurisdiction *de novo*. *Soul Quest Church of Mother Earth, Inc. v. Att'y Gen.*, 92 F.4th

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953, 964 (11th Cir. 2023). When reviewing such a dismissal, we may not consider the merits of the claim; “we have jurisdiction . . . merely for the purpose of reviewing the district court’s determination that it could not entertain the suit.” *Id.*

In *Barton v. Barbour*, the Supreme Court stated that “[i]t is a general rule that before suit is brought against a receiver[,] leave of the court by which he was appointed must be obtained.” 104 U.S. 126, 127 (1881). This rule, known as the “*Barton* doctrine,” is jurisdictional: “a court does not have ‘jurisdiction, without leave of the court by which the receiver was appointed, to entertain a suit against him for a cause of action arising in the State in which he was appointed and in which the property in his possession is situated.’” *Chua v. Ekonomou*, 1 F.4th 948, 953 (11th Cir. 2021) (quoting *Barton*, 104 U.S. at 137); see also *Asset Recovery Grp., LLC v. Cabrera*, 233 So. 3d 1173, 1176 (Fla. 3d DCA 2017) (“The *Barton* doctrine has been recognized in Florida, and [it] applies equally whether a state court appointed receiver is sued in state court . . . [or] in federal court.” (quotation and internal citations omitted)).

The *Barton* doctrine precludes Hill’s claim against Smallridge. In August 2017, Judge Williams appointed Smallridge to be a receiver over the reservoir. The receivership authorized Smallridge to enter Hill’s property and repair or alter the reservoir as necessary. Hill’s allegations against Smallridge concern Smallridge’s entry onto Hill’s property and alteration of the reservoir, *i.e.*, Smallridge’s powers as receiver. Hill fails to allege that he sought “leave of the court by which [Smallridge] was

appointed” as a receiver before Hill sued Smallridge based on Smallridge’s actions as a receiver. *Barton*, 104 U.S. at 127. Accordingly, if Smallridge’s appointment was proper, then Hill’s failure to get permission from the court means that the district court lacked jurisdiction over Hill’s claim against Smallridge. *See id.* at 137; *Chua*, 1 F.4th at 953.

Hill, however, argues that Judge Williams was not duly authorized to appoint Smallridge as a receiver. According to Hill, “Williams’ territorial jurisdiction lies in Lafayette County, Florida,” so Judge Williams is not “qualified” to exercise jurisdiction in Columbia County, Florida.

Hill is wrong. According to the Florida Constitution, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Florida “shall be the chief administrative officer of the judicial system; and shall have the power to assign justices or judges . . . to temporary duty in any court for which the judge is qualified.” Fla. Const. art. V, § 2(b). Florida law entitles the Chief Justice to designate “county court judge[s] . . . on a temporary basis to preside over circuit court cases.” Fla. Stat. § 26.57. The designee judge “may be required to perform the duties of circuit judge in other counties of the circuit as time may permit and as the need arises.” *Id.* Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(4) then delegates the Chief Justice’s assignment power to the chief judge of each judicial circuit court. *See Physicians Healthcare Plans, Inc. v. Pfeifler*, 846 So. 2d 1129, 1133 (Fla. 2003). Florida’s third judicial

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circuit includes Columbia and Suwannee Counties. Fla. Stat. § 26.021(3).

Judge Williams could appoint Smallridge as a receiver in Columbia County because he had been lawfully appointed as a circuit judge in the third judicial circuit. Initially, Judge Williams was a Suwannee County judge. See Third Judicial Circuit of Florida, *General Assignment of Judges No. 2017-055 July 1, 2017–September 4, 2017*, at 3.<sup>8</sup> The chief judge of the third judicial circuit lawfully appointed Judge Williams to be a circuit judge of Florida's third judicial circuit. See *id.* at 4; Fla. Stat. § 26.57. This appointment authorized Judge Williams to exercise jurisdiction in Columbia County because Columbia County is also in the third judicial circuit. See Fla. Stat. § 26.021(3). Accordingly, Judge Williams was qualified to appoint Smallridge as a receiver of Hill's property in Columbia County.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the district court lacked subject matter jurisdiction over Hill's claim against Smallridge, a lawfully appointed receiver, because Hill failed to get permission from the court before suing Smallridge. See *Chua*, 1 F.4th at 953.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This order is available at <https://thirdcircuitfl.org/wp-content/uploads/AO-2017-055-GENERAL-ASSIGNMENT-OF-JUDGES-JULY-1-2017-SEPTEMBER-4-2017.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/GX63-LJEN>].

<sup>9</sup> To the extent Hill conclusorily argues that Fla. Stat. § 367.165 did not authorize the County to place his land into receivership, we reject that argument as meritless. See Fla. Stat. § 367.165(2).

<sup>10</sup> Although the district court correctly concluded it lacked subject matter jurisdiction over Hill's claim against Smallridge, the district court erred by dismissing this claim with prejudice. See *Stalley ex rel. United States v. Orlando*

D. *The district court properly denied Hill's motion to supplement his pleadings*

The district court denied Hill's motion to supplement his complaint. On appeal, Hill argues that this denial allows defendants to continue to unjustly take his property. Hill's argument fails.

"We review a district court's decision to deny leave to amend for abuse of discretion." *Woldeab v. DeKalb Cnty. Bd. of Educ.*, 885 F.3d 1289, 1291 (11th Cir. 2018). "Where a more carefully drafted complaint might state a claim, a plaintiff must be given at least one chance to amend the complaint before the district court dismisses the action with prejudice." *Id.* (quotation omitted). "But a district court need not grant leave to amend when . . . a more carefully drafted complaint could not state a claim." *Id.* (quotation omitted).

The district court properly denied Hill leave to supplement his complaint. Hill's requested amendments add further allegations that Judge Williams has continued to act "completely absent jurisdiction," and the District has continued its unlawful taking of his property by draining the reservoir. As discussed, Hill has repeatedly tried to litigate these issues, and they are precluded. Thus, the district court properly denied Hill's motion because his

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*Reg'l Healthcare Sys., Inc.*, 524 F.3d 1229, 1232, 1234–35 (11th Cir. 2008). Accordingly, we will "remand in part so that the district court can reenter its dismissal order without prejudice." *Id.* at 1235.

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amendments “could not state a claim.” *Woldeab*, 885 F.3d at 1291 (quotation omitted).

### III. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, we affirm in part the judgment of the district court dismissing with prejudice Hill’s first nine claims. But because the district court lacked subject matter jurisdiction over Hill’s claim against Smallridge, that claim should have been dismissed without prejudice. Thus, we remand with instructions that the district court reenter its judgment accordingly.

**AFFIRMED IN PART AND REMANDED IN PART.**

RH-29

No.: 25-694

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

JEFFREY LANCE HILL, Sr., etc., Petitioner,

v.

LEANDRA G. JOHNSON, *et al*, Respondents.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Pursuant to Rule 29, Supreme Court Rules, I hereby certify that on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2025, true and correct copies of the foregoing Application for Stay have been furnished to all counsels of record, by U.S. Mail, postage prepaid, to the following Respondents on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026: Timothy L. Newhall, attorney for Respondents Johnson, Parker & Williams; at 400 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 – Dale A. Scott, attorney for Respondent Columbia County, at 2707 East Jefferson Street, Orlando, Florida 32803 – Jennifer B. Springfield, Respondent at 2638 SW 118<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Gainesville, Florida 32601 – David C. Willis, attorney for Respondent Suwannee River Water Management District, at P.O. Box 1873, Orlando, Florida 32802 – Susan S. Erdelyi, attorney for Respondents Foreman, City of Lake City, and Smallridge at 1200 Riverplace Blvd., Suite 800, Jacksonville, Florida 32207.

Executed on: February 17, 2026.

In compliance with 28 U.S.C. section 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury the above is true and correct: Jeffrey L. Hill, Sr., Jeffrey Lance Hill, Sr., Petitioner, 908 SE Country Club Road, Lake City Florida 32025; Phone: 386-623- 9000.