

Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation

CS/HB 7093 — Department of Environmental Protection

by State Affairs Committee; Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee; and Rep. Rooney and others (CS/SB 1582 by Appropriations Committee and Senator Dean)

The bill revises the legislative intent for the Petroleum Restoration Program in the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It requires competitive procurement for cleanup contracts as provided for in ch. 287, F.S., and amends contractor qualifications. It deletes obsolete provisions related to the reimbursement program and repeals sections of statute related to the Petroleum Preapproval Program. The bill also contains numerous conforming and technical changes related to the DEP's transitioning to the new competitive procurement process.

The bill authorizes the DEP to grant areawide and general permits for coastal construction activities and requires the DEP to adopt rules to establish the criteria and guidelines for these permits. It allows the DEP to receive gifts and donations for the administration, development, improvement, promotion, and maintenance of aquatic preserves, as well as for the future acquisition or development of aquatic preserves. The bill also directs the DEP to promote the public use of aquatic preserves by authorizing privileges or concessions for visitor accommodations.

The bill authorizes the DEP to approve the use of additional safety and warning devices to be used in conjunction with the display of uniform warning and safety flags at public beaches.

The bill provides \$1.5 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the DEP to be distributed to the Southwest Florida Water Management District to purchase 41.47 acres of property for construction of a storm water retention pond within the Heritage Lakes Community at the Oaks at Riverside property in Pasco County. The bill specifies that the Southwest Florida Water Management District agreement cannot preclude shared use of the land for open space and passive recreation.

Lastly, the bill prohibits the DEP from granting new concession agreements after May 1, 2014, in a state park that provides beach access and contain less than 7,000 feet of shoreline if the type of concession is available within 1,500 feet of the park's boundaries. The bill does not apply to concession agreements for accommodations offered at a park on or before May 1, 2014.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2014, unless otherwise provided.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 113-2