

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/HB 1177 — Biscayne Bay

by State Affairs Committee; Reps. Avila, Duran, and others (CS/SB 1482 by Appropriations Committee and Senators Garcia and Pizzo)

The bill establishes the Biscayne Bay Commission as an advisory council within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The commission must serve as the official coordinating clearinghouse for all public policy and projects related to Biscayne Bay, including developing plans and ensuring projects are funded and implemented. The bill does not affect or supersede the regulatory authority of any government agency or local government, and any responsibilities of a governmental entity relating to Biscayne Bay remain with such entity. DEP must provide, within its available resources, administrative support and service to the commission as requested.

The bill provides for the composition of the commission. Members of the commission must serve four-year terms that are staggered. All nine members of the commission are voting members. Members must serve without compensation.

The commission must meet at least quarterly and may meet monthly. The commission must conduct the following activities:

- Consolidate existing plans and programs into a coordinated strategic plan, which must be monitored and regularly revised, for improving Biscayne Bay and the surrounding areas.
- Prepare a consolidated financial plan, which must be monitored and regularly revised, using the projected financial resources available from the jurisdictional agencies.
- Provide technical assistance and support to help implement the strategic and financial plans.
- Work in consultation with the United States Department of the Interior.
- Provide a forum for the exchange of information.
- Act as a clearinghouse for public information.

The bill requires the commission to produce a semiannual report describing the accomplishments of the commission and each member agency, as well as the status of each pending task. The first report must be submitted by January 15, 2022. The report must be submitted to specified government entities and made available on the websites of DEP and Miami-Dade County.

The bill also prohibits sewage disposal facilities from disposing of any wastes into Biscayne Bay or its tributaries without providing advanced waste treatment.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 117-0