

By Senator Clary

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to a pilot baitfish tarpaulin
seine program; establishing objectives for
evaluation of the seines; authorizing the
collection of fees from baitfish tarpaulin
seine landings and the use of revenues for
evaluation of the program; providing an
effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The Department of Environmental Protection
is authorized to conduct a 2-year study to evaluate the
existing pilot program created in section 42 of chapter
97-160, Laws of Florida, and section 24 of chapter 97-164,
Laws of Florida.

(1) The study shall determine:

(a) The effect of the pilot program on the health and
abundance of each baitfish species authorized for harvest with
the tarpaulin seine;

(b) The potential for impacting nontargeted species
with the gear and equipment; and

(c) Whether the durability and structural integrity of
the tarpaulin seines is sufficient to minimize potential
environmental damage and the need for cleanup activities.

(2) The study shall include, but not be limited to,
fishery-dependent, onboard observations. The results of the
study shall be used to determine the future management of
baitfish stocks in Northwest Florida.

(3) The department may levy and administer fees on all
saltwater products caught and landed by use of baitfish

1 tarpaulin seines licensed under section 42 of chapter 97-160,
2 Laws of Florida, and section 24 of chapter 97-164, Laws of
3 Florida. The fees must be based on pounds of saltwater
4 products landed and may not exceed 1 cent per pound. All fees
5 collected under this subsection shall be deposited into the
6 Marine Resource Conservation Trust Fund for use as provided in
7 subsection (4).

8 (4) Fees shall be used to defray the cost of onboard
9 observations of vessels licensed under the pilot program.
10 Excess fees may be used by the department to further the goals
11 of the study.

12 (5) The department shall provide the Marine Fisheries
13 Commission with an interim status report by October 1, 1999,
14 and shall provide the commission and Legislature a final
15 report by October 1, 2000.

16 (6) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 120.54,
17 Florida Statutes, the department shall implement this section
18 without the adoption of rules.

19 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
20 law.

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23 SENATE SUMMARY

24 Authorizes a 2-year study for the Department of
25 Environmental Protection to evaluate a pilot program for
26 a baitfish tarpaulin seine fishery created by the 1997
Legislature. Provides an appropriation and requires
reports.