

By Representative Flanagan

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to water resources; creating  
3           the Florida Oceans Study Committee; providing  
4           membership; providing for a report; providing  
5           contents of the report; requiring the committee  
6           to recommend priority research, scientific  
7           monitoring needs, and specified funding  
8           mechanisms; creating the Florida Ocean  
9           Commission; providing for appointment of  
10          members; providing duties of the commission;  
11          providing for annual reports; providing an  
12          appropriation; providing an effective date.

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14           WHEREAS, Florida, the fourth largest state in the  
15          union, having the longest coastline in the contiguous United  
16          States, possesses an abundance of fresh water bodies in a  
17          peninsula bounded by the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic  
18          Ocean, and

19           WHEREAS, a thin strip of land of nearly 35.7 million  
20          acres, Florida is bounded on three sides by the ocean, and

21           WHEREAS, approximately 8,400 miles of tidal coastline  
22          wrap around the state, and below its southern tip lie the only  
23          living coral reefs in North America - the third largest coral  
24          reef in the world, and

25           WHEREAS, Florida's territorial waters extend three  
26          miles beyond its shores into the Atlantic Ocean and three  
27          marine leagues, or approximately 10 miles, into the Gulf of  
28          Mexico, and

29           WHEREAS, as an economic engine, Florida's oceans form  
30          the basis for three of its most important industries,  
31          including fishing, shipping, and tourism, and

1           WHEREAS, but while they are vast, Florida's ocean  
2 resources are not inexhaustible, and

3           WHEREAS, increasing demands for Florida's ocean  
4 resources, coupled with an ever-growing ability to recover  
5 those resources, are threatening the health and vitality of  
6 Florida's oceans, and

7           WHEREAS, in response to this need, the late Governor  
8 Lawton Chiles appointed the Florida Governor's Ocean Committee  
9 for the purpose of promoting public awareness of the  
10 significance of the ocean to Florida, as well as guiding the  
11 state's efforts to develop and implement a coordinated and  
12 comprehensive ocean resources management strategy, and

13           WHEREAS, since its inception in January 1998, the  
14 24-member Florida Governor's Ocean Committee has met several  
15 times and submitted a preliminary report to the Governor  
16 entitled "Florida's Ocean Challenges," and

17           WHEREAS, the committee considered several of the  
18 management challenges and has developed an interim draft  
19 document of management strategies and actions and is preparing  
20 to receive public input for the next six months, and

21           WHEREAS, in order to maintain the momentum, continuity,  
22 and important work of this committee, it is the purpose of  
23 this act to reconstitute the Florida Governor's Ocean  
24 Committee, renamed as the Florida Oceans Study Committee, for  
25 the purpose of completing the work it began and to pave the  
26 way for the implementation of the committee's recommendations  
27 through the establishment of a Florida Ocean Commission, NOW,  
28 THEREFORE,

29  
30 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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1           Section 1. Florida Oceans Study Committee.--  
2           (1) CREATION; MEMBERSHIP.--The Florida Governor's  
3 Ocean Committee is hereby renamed the Florida Oceans Study  
4 Committee. The initial members of the Florida Ocean's Study  
5 Committee shall be the members of the Florida Governor's Ocean  
6 Committee who are serving on the committee on the effective  
7 date of this act, who may serve the remainder of their terms  
8 through June 30, 2000. Members of the committee shall serve  
9 without compensation but shall be reimbursed for per diem and  
10 travel expenses in accordance with s. 112.061. The Coastal  
11 Zone Management Section of the Department of Community Affairs  
12 shall provide staff to the Florida Oceans Study Committee.  
13           (2) REPORT.--The final report of the Florida Oceans  
14 Study Committee shall be submitted to the Governor, the  
15 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
16 Representatives no later than February 1, 2000. The report  
17 shall address specific priorities for a coordinated management  
18 policy for Florida's oceans, including effective public  
19 outreach and education. The committee shall recommend priority  
20 research and scientific monitoring needs, and funding  
21 mechanisms for a comprehensive scientific assessment of the  
22 present status and future vitality and health of Florida's  
23 oceans in consultation with the Florida members of the  
24 Southern Association of Marine Laboratories, Eckerd College,  
25 the Florida Institute of Oceanography, the Florida Institute  
26 of Technology, the Florida Marine Research Institute, Florida  
27 State University, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution,  
28 Inc., Mote Marine Laboratory, Nova Southeastern University,  
29 the University of Florida, the University of Miami, the  
30 University of South Florida, and the Florida Sea Grant  
31 Program. The committee shall also explore cost-sharing avenues

1 with the Federal Government and appropriate and equitable  
2 funding responsibilities of federal agencies which may be of  
3 benefit to the state.

4 Section 2. Florida Ocean Commission.--

5 (1) CREATION.--Following the submission of the final  
6 report by the Florida Oceans Study Committee in February 2000,  
7 the Governor shall appoint the members of the Florida Ocean  
8 Commission as provided in subsection (2). The Governor shall  
9 make all appointments to the commission no later than  
10 September 30, 2000. The commission shall remain in existence  
11 through June 30, 2005. The existence of the commission may be  
12 extended, subject to review and approval by the Legislature.

13 (2) MEMBERSHIP.--The Florida Ocean Commission shall  
14 consist of 24 members to be appointed by the Governor. The  
15 appointed members of the commission shall consist of  
16 representatives from the Department of Community Affairs, the  
17 Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of  
18 State, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,  
19 the Department of Education, the Fish and Wildlife  
20 Conservation Commission, the Executive Office of the Governor,  
21 and local representatives from the fields of conservation,  
22 education, science, law, recreation, and business. Six ex  
23 officio members shall be appointed to represent the Federal  
24 Government, from the Department of Defense, the Army Corps of  
25 Engineers, the Department of the Interior, the National  
26 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental  
27 Protection Agency, and the Coast Guard. Members of the  
28 commission shall serve without compensation but shall be  
29 reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses in accordance with  
30 s. 112.061.

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1       (3) DUTIES.--It shall be the duty of the commission to  
2 implement the recommendations of the Florida Oceans Study  
3 Committee and provide ongoing coordination and oversight of  
4 ocean policy issues.

5       (4) REPORTS.--The commission shall submit annual  
6 reports with recommendations on significant ocean policy  
7 issues to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the  
8 Speaker of the House of Representatives.

9       Section 3. There is appropriated for fiscal year 1999  
10 the sum of \$80,000 from funds in the General Revenue Fund for  
11 the expenses of the Florida Oceans Study Committee. Of the  
12 appropriated funds, up to \$30,000 may be utilized for  
13 workshops and activities related to developing priority  
14 research and scientific monitoring needs for Florida's waters.

15       Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
16 law.

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19                               HOUSE SUMMARY

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21       Renames the Florida Governor's Ocean Committee as the  
22       Florida Oceans Study Committee, and continues the  
23       existence of the committee through June 30, 2000.  
24       Provides that the current members of the committee shall  
25       continue to serve as members of the study committee.  
26       Provides for submission of a final report to the Governor  
27       by February 2000. Requires the committee to recommend  
28       priority research, scientific monitoring needs, and  
29       funding mechanisms for a comprehensive scientific  
30       assessment of the present status and future vitality and  
31       health of Florida's oceans. Provides an appropriation for  
      the expenses of the study committee.

32       Creates a 24-member Florida Ocean Commission for the  
33       purpose of implementing the recommendations of the  
34       Florida Oceans Study Committee and to provide ongoing  
35       coordination and oversight of the state's ocean policy  
36       issues. Provides for appointment of commission members by  
37       the Governor no later than September 2000. Provides for  
38       annual reports.