

By the Committee on Law Enforcement & Crime Prevention and
Representative Futch

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the placement of rip current
3 warning signs; providing a short title;
4 creating s. 380.275, F.S.; providing for a
5 cooperative effort among state agencies and
6 local governments to plan for and assist in the
7 placement of rip current warning signs;
8 providing that the Department of Community
9 Affairs shall direct and coordinate the
10 program; requiring the development of a uniform
11 rip current warning sign; authorizing the
12 department to coordinate the distribution and
13 erection of rip current warning signs;
14 providing for rules; limiting the liability of
15 participating governmental entities; providing
16 an effective date.

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

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20 Section 1. This act may be cited as the
21 "McGriff-Mannix Act" in honor of James McGriff and Brian
22 Mannix, who lost their lives as a result of rip currents.

23 Section 2. Section 380.275, Florida Statutes, is
24 created to read:

25 380.275 Beaches and coastal areas; posting of rip
26 current warning signs.--

27 (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that a
28 cooperative effort among state agencies and local governments
29 be developed to plan for and assist in the placement of rip
30 current warning signs along the public beaches and coastal
31 areas of the state. A rip current is a strong surface current

1 of water flowing out past the surf zone, which can pull even
2 the strongest swimmer into deeper water. Rip currents pose a
3 significant danger of drowning to tourists and the general
4 public, and it is therefore important to inform the public to
5 be cautious in coastal areas where rip currents can occur.

6 (2) The Department of Community Affairs, through the
7 Florida Coastal Management Program, shall direct and
8 coordinate the rip current warning sign program, which shall
9 be a program to encourage the placement of rip current warning
10 signs in areas which may pose a significant risk to the public
11 as a result of rip currents. Signs may be located where the
12 public has established an access way to a beach or coastal
13 area.

14 (3) The department shall develop a uniform rip current
15 warning sign for use at any public beach or along any coastal
16 area where there may be a significant threat to the public as
17 a result of rip currents, to be placed, insofar as is
18 practicable, wherever the public has established access ways
19 to the beach.

20 (4) The department is authorized, within the limits of
21 appropriations available to it for such purposes, to establish
22 and operate a program to encourage the placement of rip
23 current warning signs in areas where the public has
24 established an access way to a beach or coastal area that may
25 be subject to a significant threat of dangerous rip currents
26 and therefore may pose a hazard to the public. The department
27 shall also coordinate with the local governing body the
28 distribution and erection of rip current warning signs,
29 wherever there is a request for such assistance.

30 (5) The department is authorized to promulgate such
31 rules and forms as may be necessary to carry out the purposes

1 of this section and to ensure that all projects to which
2 assistance is rendered under this section are for the purpose
3 of providing and erecting rip current warning signs.

4 (6) The state, state agencies, local governments, and
5 local government agencies shall not be held liable for any
6 injury caused by the placement or maintenance of rip current
7 warning signs or the failure to install or maintain rip
8 current signs as provided by this section.

9 Section 3. This act shall take effect October 1, 1999.

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11 HOUSE SUMMARY

12 Provides for a cooperative effort among state agencies
13 and local governments to plan for and assist in the
14 placement of rip current warning signs, under the
15 direction of the Department of Community Affairs.
16 Requires the development of a uniform rip current warning
17 sign and authorizes the department to coordinate the
18 distribution and erection of such signs. Limits the
19 liability of participating governmental entities.
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