

By Representative Needelman

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

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

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21 Section 1. Section 380.275, Florida Statutes, is
22 created to read:

23 380.275 Beaches and coastal areas; posting of rip
24 current warning signs.--

25 (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that a
26 cooperative effort among state agencies and local governments
27 be developed to plan for and assist in the placement of rip
28 current warning signs along the public beaches and coastal
29 areas of the state. A rip current is a strong surface current
30 of water flowing out past the surf zone which can pull even
31 the strongest swimmer into deeper water. Rip currents pose a

1 significant danger of drowning to tourists and the public, and
2 it is therefore important to warn the public to be cautious in
3 coastal areas where rip currents can occur.

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

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

18 (4) The department shall, within the limits of
19 appropriations available to it for such purposes, establish
20 and operate a program to fund the placement of rip current
21 warning signs in areas where the local government entity has
22 established an access way to a beach or coastal area that may
23 be subject to a significant threat of dangerous rip currents
24 and therefore may pose a hazard to the public. The department
25 shall coordinate efforts to determine the locations that local
26 governments consider appropriate for placement of rip current
27 warning signs. For these locations, the department shall make
28 rip current warning signs available to the governing body of
29 any county or municipality in such quantity as is determined
30 by the department. The department shall also coordinate with
31 the local governing body the distribution and erection of rip

1 current warning signs, wherever there is a request for such
2 assistance.
3 (5) The department may adopt such rules and forms as
4 are necessary to carry out the purposes of this section and to
5 ensure that all projects to which assistance is rendered under
6 this section are for the purpose of providing and erecting rip
7 current warning signs.
8 (6) The state, state agencies, local governments, and
9 local government agencies shall not be held liable for any
10 injury caused by the placement or maintenance of rip current
11 warning signs or the failure to install or maintain rip
12 current signs as provided by this section.
13 (7) This section is not intended to relieve a
14 governmental entity of any responsibility imposed by other
15 provisions of law with regard to the posting of rip current
16 warning signs other than those covered by this section.

17 Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2001.

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20 SENATE SUMMARY

21 Provides for a cooperative effort among state agencies
22 and local governments to plan for and assist in the
23 placement of rip current warning signs, under the
24 direction of the Department of Community Affairs.
25 Requires the development of a uniform rip current warning
26 sign and authorizes the department to coordinate the
27 location, distribution, and erection of such signs.
28 Limits the liability of participating governmental
29 entities.
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