

By the Committee on Natural Resources & Environmental
Protection and 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 an effective date.

16
17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

18
19 Section 1. Section 380.275, Florida Statutes, is
20 created to read:

21 380.275 Beaches and coastal areas; posting of rip
22 current warning signs.--

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

1 it is therefore important to warn the public to be cautious in
2 coastal areas where rip currents can occur.

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

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

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

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 failure to install the uniform rip
11 current warning signs provided for in this section; however,
12 this subsection is not intended to limit in any way the
13 responsibility imposed on such entities by other provisions of
14 law with regard to the posting of rip current warning signs on
15 public beaches.

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

17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31