

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: CS/SB 2120

SPONSOR: Natural Resources Committee, Senator Sullivan and Others

SUBJECT: Sea Turtle License Plates

DATE: February 19, 2002 REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|----------|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1. | Branning | Voigt | NR | Favorable/CS |
| 2. | _____ | _____ | GO | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ | FT | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ | AGG | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ | AP | _____ |
| 6. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

I. Summary:

This bill increases the annual use fee for the Sea Turtle license plate. Provides for distribution of a portion of the annual revenue from the issuance of the Sea Turtle license plate to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation. Provides that a portion of the proceeds distributed to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation may be used for administrative costs and to promote and market the license plate.

This bill amends ss. 320.08056 and 320.08058, F.S.; and repeals s. 370.12(1)(h), F.S.

II. Present Situation:

Pursuant to ch. 320, F.S., there are over 50 specialized motor vehicle license plates available in the state of Florida. Some of these license plates are available to anyone who wishes to purchase one and pay the additional fees associated with that license plate. Others are only available to select persons who may have special qualifications. Such license plates include those issued to members of Congress or the State Legislature, and those license plates issued to former prisoners of war, Purple Heart Recipients, and Medal of Honor winners.

In 1997, the Legislature authorized the issuance of a Sea Turtle license plate. Section 320.08056, F.S., provides that the annual use fee for this specialty license plate is \$17.50.

Section 320.08058, F.S., provides that the annual use fees from this license plate are to be deposited in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund in the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The first \$500,000 in annual revenue is to be used by the Florida Marine Turtle Protection Program to conduct sea turtle protection, research, and recovery activities. Additional license plate revenue, up to an amount not exceeding 30 percent of the total annual revenue, shall be dispersed annually through the marine turtle grants program as provided

in s. 370.12(1)(h), F.S. The remaining annual use proceeds shall be used by the Florida Marine Turtle Protection Program for sea turtle conservation activities.

Section 370.12(1), F.S., is known as the “Marine Turtle Protection Act.” Under this act, the stated legislative intent is to ensure that the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission has the appropriate authority and resources to implement its responsibilities under the recovery plans of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the following species of marine turtles:

- Atlantic loggerhead turtle
- Atlantic green turtle
- Leatherback turtle
- Atlantic hawksbill turtle
- Atlantic ridley turtle

Subsection (h) of s. 370.12(1), F.S., requires the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to provide grants to coastal local governments, educational institutions, and Florida-based nonprofit organizations to conduct marine turtle research, conservation, and education activities within the state. The criteria for allocating the available grant funds must include the scope of the proposed activity, the relevance of the proposed activity to the recovery plans for marine turtles, the demand and public support for the proposed activity, the duration of the proposed activity, the availability of alternative funding, and the estimated cost of the activity. The executive director of the commission must appoint a committee of at least five members, including at least two nongovernmental representatives, to consider and choose grant recipients from proposals submitted by eligible entities. Committee members may not receive compensation from the commission.

Revenues from some of the other specialty license plates are directed to citizen support organizations or specific nonprofit foundations. Other specialty license plate revenues, like the Sea Turtle license plate revenues, are deposited in a trust fund in a state agency or to a state university.

The following specialty license plate revenues, or a portion thereof, are deposited to the benefit of a nonprofit foundation:

- Challenger License Plate — 50 percent of the annual user fee is distributed to the Astronauts Memorial Foundation, Inc.
- Florida Special Olympics License Plate — The first \$5 million collected annually must be forwarded to the private nonprofit corporation described in s. 393.002, F.S. (Developmental Disabilities Council)
- Florida Professional Sports Team License Plate — 45 percent of the proceeds of the annual use fee allocated to the Florida Sports Foundation, a direct-support organization of the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development.

- Police Athletic League License Plate — The annual use fees are distributed to the Florida Police Athletic League, Inc.
- Keep Kids Drug-Free License Plate — The annual use fees are distributed to the Keep Kids Drug-Free Foundation, Inc.
- Conserve Wildlife License Plate — The proceeds of the annual use fees are forwarded to the Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Inc., a citizen support organization to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- United State Marine Corps License Plate — After the first \$50,000 collected annually, the fees are deposited into the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, Inc.

Other specialty license plates, such as the Florida United States Olympic Committee License Plate and the Florida Agriculture License Plate provide that the proceeds of the use fee be forwarded to direct support organizations.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill amends s. 320.08056, F.S., to increase the annual use fee for the Sea Turtle license plate from \$17.50 to \$22.50.

Section 320.08058, F.S., is amended to provide that after the first \$500,000 in annual revenue from the annual use fees which is deposited in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund, the next \$215,000 in annual use fees is to be distributed to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation to fund sea turtle research and education programs. The Caribbean Conservation Corporation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) membership organization based in Gainesville, Florida. Since its founding, the corporation has been dedicated to the conservation of sea turtles and related marine and coastal wildlife through research, training, advocacy, education and the protection of natural areas. The corporation was the first marine turtle conservation organization in the world, and has more than 40 years of experience in national and international sea turtle conservation, research and educational endeavors.

The Caribbean Conservation Corporation shall annually distribute assigned funds through a Sea Turtle Grants Program that supports sea turtle research and education activities of Florida-based nonprofit groups, educational institutions, and coastal counties. The Caribbean Conservation Corporation shall write and publish procedures for submitting grant applications and criteria for allocating available funds, and shall appoint a technical advisory committee, composed of at least five members, including two representatives from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, to select grant recipients from proposals submitted by eligible entities. Any additional annual revenue shall be distributed as follows:

- 70 percent shall be deposited in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund and used by the Florida Marine Turtle Protection Program for sea turtle conservation activities.
- 30 percent shall be assigned to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation for distribution through the Sea Turtle Grants Program. Up to 15 percent of the funds distributed to the

Caribbean Conservation Corporation may be expended for administrative costs directly associated with the grants program. Up to 10 percent of the funds distributed to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation may be used to promote and market the license plate.

This bill also repeals paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of s. 370.12, F.S., relating to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Sea Turtle Grants Program effective June 30, 2003.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

Increases the annual use fee for the Sea Turtle license plate from \$17.50 to \$22.50. None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Those persons wanting to purchase a Sea Turtle license plate would pay an additional \$5 for the license plate.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Currently, all of the revenues derived from the Sea Turtle license plate goes to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The first \$500,000 supports the commission's programs and the rest of the money is used primarily to fund a grant program. This bill still would provide that the first \$500,000 go to the commission; however, the next \$215,000 would go to the Caribbean Conservation Commission for them to operate the grants program. Anything over \$715,000 would be split between the commission and the corporation with 70 percent going to the commission and 30 percent going to the corporation.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
