

HB 1431

2004

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Great Florida Wreck-reaction Diving
3 Trail Act; providing a popular name; providing purpose of
4 the act; creating the Florida MARAD and U.S. Navy Vessel
5 Placement Commission; providing membership and
6 organization of the commission; providing duties of the
7 commission; providing for administrative support;
8 providing an effective date.

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10 WHEREAS, in the past, the United States Navy has used
11 unneeded ships as targets for military exercises known as
12 sinking exercises, and

13 WHEREAS, now the Navy has devised an alternative means of
14 disposing of obsolete Navy vessels that allows the vessels to
15 serve in a productive capacity for hundreds of years past their
16 intended use, and

17 WHEREAS, the National Defense Authorization Bill for fiscal
18 year 2004 (H.R. 1588) allows appropriate decommissioned ships to
19 be donated for use as artificial reefing, and

20 WHEREAS, the process of using obsolete vessels as man-made
21 artificial reefs not only promotes marine life and fishing but
22 relieves pressures on natural coral reefs, and

23 WHEREAS, the measure allows the Navy to accomplish the
24 overall process for cost-effective donation transfer of
25 available naval vessels, and

26 WHEREAS, the United States Maritime Administration (MARAD)
27 will coordinate federal agency solicitation and application for
28 obtaining the vessels for use as artificial reefs, and

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29 WHEREAS, the donation and transfer application for all Navy
 30 and MARAD ships available for use as artificial reefs may be
 31 submitted only by states, commonwealths, and territories and
 32 possessions of the United States, or municipal corporations or
 33 political subdivisions thereof, and

34 WHEREAS, the program provides a practical option for
 35 disposing of inactive naval vessels in a cost-effective and
 36 environmentally sound manner that can also promote ecotourism
 37 associated with recreational diving and fishing in Florida, NOW,
 38 THEREFORE,

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

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 42 Section 1. (1) POPULAR NAME.--This act may be referred to
 43 by the popular name the "Great Florida Wreck-reation Diving Trail
 44 Act of 2004."

45 (2) PURPOSE.--The purpose of the Great Florida Wrek-
 46 reation Diving Trail Act is to promote ecotourism associated
 47 with recreational diving and fishing in Florida through the
 48 placement of United States Maritime Administration (MARAD) and
 49 United States Navy decommissioned vessels in Florida waters as
 50 artificial reefs. The commission shall be considered the
 51 artificial reef coordinator for Florida for purposes of the
 52 United States Department of Transportation transfer of obsolete
 53 MARAD and Navy vessels program.

54 (3) FLORIDA MARAD AND U.S. NAVY VESSEL PLACEMENT
 55 COMMISSION; CREATION; MEMBERSHIP.--The Florida MARAD and U.S.
 56 Navy Vessel Placement Commission is hereby created. The
 57 commission shall consist of the following five members:

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58 (a) Three members representing recreational scuba diving
 59 in Florida, one of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the
 60 House of Representatives, one of whom shall be appointed by the
 61 President of the Senate, and one of whom shall be appointed by
 62 the Governor.

63 (b) Two members representing VISIT Florida, appointed by
 64 the Governor.

65 (4) ORGANIZATION.--The Governor shall designate one member
 66 of the commission as its chair. Vacancies in the membership of
 67 the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the
 68 original appointments.

69 (5) DUTIES.--The commission shall review applications from
 70 Florida counties and municipalities for placement of MARAD and
 71 U.S. Navy decommissioned vessels in Florida waters as artificial
 72 reefs. The commission shall receive donation transfer
 73 applications for such vessels and, using the Maritime
 74 Administration application evaluation criteria, as amended,
 75 shall recommend to the Governor sites within the state for
 76 placement of such vessels. The commission shall develop a master
 77 site plan for the purposes of maximizing the number and type of
 78 vessels for placement in Florida waters. Criteria shall include
 79 placement of vessels in a geographically dispersed manner.

80 (6) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.--VISIT Florida shall provide
 81 administrative support to the commission for all of its
 82 activities.

83 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
 84 law.