

By Senator Posey

24-1270-04

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to regulation of watercraft  
3           speed in manatee slow-speed zones; directing  
4           the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
5           to conduct a study of the effectiveness of  
6           signs warning boaters of manatee slow-speed  
7           zones in the inland and ocean waters of this  
8           state; providing legislative intent regarding  
9           certain areas to be studied in the  
10          effectiveness evaluation; directing the  
11          commission to prepare a report and submit the  
12          report to the Governor, the President of the  
13          Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
14          Representatives; directing the commission to  
15          make specific policy recommendations regarding  
16          signs in manatee slow-speed zones; providing an  
17          effective date.

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

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21           Section 1. Manatee slow-speed zones; signs warning  
22 boaters; conduct of study.--

23           (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that the Fish  
24 and Wildlife Conservation Commission conduct a study of the  
25 effectiveness of signs warning boaters of manatee slow-speed  
26 zones in the inland and ocean waters of this state.  
27 Specifically, the commission shall undertake a quantitative  
28 effectiveness evaluation to determine the impact of signs  
29 posted in each manatee slow-speed zone. The evaluation must  
30 take into consideration the manatee mortality rates in each  
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1 zone before and after the signs indicating the slow-speed zone  
2 were posted. The evaluation shall determine if:

3 (a) Existing signs are effective in the manatee  
4 slow-speed zones. If the placement of signs in any one zone  
5 appears to be ineffective, the commission must state its  
6 reasons if it believes that the signs should not be removed.

7 (b) Removal of all signs from speed and buffer zones  
8 and placement of shore-based signs at boat launches and  
9 marinas would be more effective.

10 (c) Unlighted, multiple-piling large signs should be  
11 replaced by marker buoys.

12 (d) Higher-speed travel corridors should be permitted  
13 in all slow-speed zone areas that have a navigable channel.  
14 Outside the high-speed corridor, the maximum allowable speed  
15 would be 7 miles per hour.

16 (2) The commission shall complete its evaluation of  
17 the speed zones by January 1, 2005. The commission shall  
18 submit a report of its findings to the Governor, the President  
19 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives  
20 by February 1, 2005. The report must detail the results of the  
21 evaluation program and shall include specific recommendations  
22 for developing state and local policies relating to the  
23 appropriate placement of signs in manatee slow-speed zones.

24 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.

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27 SENATE SUMMARY

28 Directs the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to  
29 study the effectiveness of signs warning boaters of  
30 manatee slow-speed zones in the inland and ocean waters  
31 of this state. Directs the commission to submit a report  
to the Governor and Legislature. Requires the commission  
to make specific policy recommendations regarding signs  
in manatee slow-speed zones.