

By Senator Jones

13-1549A-04

See HB

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1           WHEREAS, the donation and transfer application for all  
2 Navy and MARAD ships available for use as artificial reefs may  
3 be submitted only by states, commonwealths, and territories  
4 and possessions of the United States, or municipal  
5 corporations or political subdivisions thereof, and

6           WHEREAS, the program provides a practical option for  
7 disposing of inactive naval vessels in a cost-effective and  
8 environmentally sound manner that can also promote ecotourism  
9 associated with recreational diving and fishing in Florida,

10 NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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14           Section 1. (1) POPULAR NAME.--This act may be  
15 referred to by the popular name the "Great Florida  
16 Wrek-reation Diving Trail Act of 2004."

17           (2) PURPOSE.--The purpose of the Great Florida  
18 Wrek-reation Diving Trail Act is to promote ecotourism  
19 associated with recreational diving and fishing in Florida  
20 through the placement of United States Maritime Administration  
21 (MARAD) and United States Navy decommissioned vessels in  
22 Florida waters as artificial reefs. The commission shall be  
23 considered the artificial reef coordinator for Florida for  
24 purposes of the United States Department of Transportation  
25 transfer of obsolete MARAD and Navy vessels program.

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

30           (a) Three members representing recreational scuba  
31 diving in Florida, one of whom shall be appointed by the

1 Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be  
2 appointed by the President of the Senate, and one of whom  
3 shall be appointed by the Governor.

4 (b) Two members representing VISIT Florida, appointed  
5 by the Governor.

6 (4) ORGANIZATION.--The Governor shall designate one  
7 member of the commission as its chair. Vacancies in the  
8 membership of the commission shall be filled in the same  
9 manner as the original appointments.

10 (5) DUTIES.--The commission shall review applications  
11 from Florida counties and municipalities for placement of  
12 MARAD and U.S. Navy decommissioned vessels in Florida waters  
13 as artificial reefs. The commission shall receive donation  
14 transfer applications for such vessels and, using the Maritime  
15 Administration application evaluation criteria, as amended,  
16 shall recommend to the Governor sites within the state for  
17 placement of such vessels. The commission shall develop a  
18 master site plan for the purposes of maximizing the number and  
19 type of vessels for placement in Florida waters. Criteria  
20 shall include placement of vessels in a geographically  
21 dispersed manner.

22 (6) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.--VISIT Florida shall  
23 provide administrative support to the commission for all of  
24 its activities.

25 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
26 law.

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