

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to MARAD and U.S. Navy Vessel
3 placement; creating the Florida MARAD and U.S.
4 Navy Vessel Placement Advisory Council within
5 the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission;
6 providing membership, organization,
7 administrative support, and duties of the
8 council; providing that the council is subject
9 to public records and public meetings
10 requirements; providing for expiration of the
11 council; providing funding to support travel
12 and per diem; providing an effective date.

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

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

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

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

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

30 WHEREAS, the United States Maritime Administration
31 (MARAD) will coordinate federal agency solicitation and

1 application for obtaining the vessels for use as artificial
2 reefs, and

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

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

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

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16 Section 1. (1) FLORIDA MARAD AND U.S. NAVY VESSEL
17 PLACEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL; CREATION.--There is created within
18 the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission the Florida
19 MARAD and U.S. Navy Vessel Placement Advisory Council, which
20 is a council as defined in section 20.03, Florida Statutes.

21 (2) MEMBERSHIP.--The council shall consist of five
22 members, all of whom shall be residents of the state. Three
23 members shall represent recreational scuba diving in Florida,
24 one of whom shall be appointed by the President of the Senate,
25 one of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of
26 Representatives, and one of whom shall be appointed by the
27 Governor. Two members shall represent recreational fishing
28 interests and the tourism industry in Florida, one of whom
29 shall be appointed by the President of the Senate and one of
30 whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of
31 Representatives. Members shall be appointed in such a manner

1 as to equitably represent different geographic areas of the
2 state. The initial appointments to the council shall be made
3 no later than September 1, 2004.

4 (3) ORGANIZATION.--

5 (a) The Governor shall designate one member of the
6 council as its chair. Vacancies in membership of the council
7 shall be filled in the same manner as the original
8 appointments.

9 (b) The council shall meet quarterly or at the call of
10 the chairman. A majority of the members shall constitute a
11 quorum for the purpose of conducting business.

12 (c) The council shall establish procedures for its
13 operations, including notice procedures for council meetings
14 and procedures with respect to the application process under
15 subsection (5).

16 (d) Members of the council shall serve without
17 compensation but shall be entitled to per diem and travel
18 expenses pursuant to section 112.061, Florida Statutes, while
19 in the performance of their duties.

20 (e) Records and meetings of the council shall be
21 subject to the requirements of the public records law and
22 public meetings law in chapters 119 and 286, Florida Statutes,
23 respectively.

24 (4) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.--The commission shall
25 provide administrative support to the council for all of its
26 activities. The commission is authorized to accept private
27 donations to support council activities. The commission shall
28 maintain a complete financial record of all donations and
29 expenditures.

30 (5) DUTIES.--
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1 (a) The council shall advise the commission on matters
2 relating to the obsolete MARAD and U.S. Navy vessel transfer
3 program.

4 (b) The council shall review applications from Florida
5 counties and municipalities for placement of MARAD and U.S.
6 Navy decommissioned vessels in Florida waters as artificial
7 reefs.

8 (c) The council shall rank donation transfer
9 applications for such vessels using federal evaluation
10 criteria and shall recommend to the commission sites within
11 the state for placement of such vessels.

12 (d) The council shall assist the commission in the
13 development of a master site plan for the purposes of
14 maximizing the number and type of vessels for placement in
15 Florida waters.

16 (6) TERM.--The council shall expire on December 31,
17 2006.

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

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