

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to manatees; amending s. 215.22, F.S.;  
3 exempting, until a specified date, certain revenue  
4 deposited in the Save the Manatee Trust Fund from a  
5 service charge assessed against state trust funds;  
6 amending s. 379.2431, F.S.; authorizing the  
7 expenditure of funds from the Save the Manatee Trust  
8 Fund to conduct a manatee speed zone study and  
9 statewide manatee distribution and abundance surveys  
10 and reports; creating s. 379.2434, F.S.; requiring the  
11 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to contract  
12 with an independent, qualified party to conduct a  
13 manatee speed zone effectiveness study; requiring the  
14 commission to submit a report detailing the findings  
15 of the study to the Governor and Legislature by a  
16 specified date; requiring the commission to conduct a  
17 statewide manatee distribution and abundance survey  
18 and report; authorizing the commission to conduct  
19 additional surveys and reports as necessary;  
20 authorizing the expenditure of funds from the Save the  
21 Manatee Trust Fund to conduct the manatee speed zone  
22 study and statewide manatee distribution and abundance  
23 surveys and reports; providing an effective date.

24  
25 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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27 Section 1. Paragraph (w) is added to subsection (1) of  
 28 section 215.22, Florida Statutes, to read:

29 215.22 Certain income and certain trust funds exempt.—

30 (1) The following income of a revenue nature or the  
 31 following trust funds shall be exempt from the appropriation  
 32 required by s. 215.20(1):

33 (w) Until July 1, 2026, the Save the Manatee Trust Fund.

34 Section 2. Subsection (4) of section 379.2431, Florida  
 35 Statutes, is amended to read:

36 379.2431 Marine animals; regulation.—

37 (4) ~~ANNUAL~~ FUNDING OF PROGRAMS FOR MARINE ANIMALS.—

38 (a) Each fiscal year the Save the Manatee Trust Fund shall  
 39 be available to fund an impartial scientific benchmark census of  
 40 the manatee population in the state. Weather permitting, the  
 41 study shall be conducted annually by the Fish and Wildlife  
 42 Conservation Commission and the results shall be made available  
 43 to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
 44 Representatives, and the Governor and Cabinet for use in the  
 45 evaluation and development of manatee protection measures. In  
 46 addition, the Save the Manatee Trust Fund shall be available for  
 47 annual funding of the provisions specified in s. 379.2434;  
 48 activities of public and private organizations and those of the  
 49 commission intended to provide manatee and marine mammal  
 50 protection and recovery effort; manufacture and erection of  
 51 informational and regulatory signs; production, publication, and  
 52 distribution of educational materials; participation in manatee

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53 and marine mammal research programs, including carcass salvage  
54 and other programs; programs intended to assist the recovery of  
55 the manatee as an endangered species, assist the recovery of the  
56 endangered or threatened marine mammals, and prevent the  
57 endangerment of other species of marine mammals; and other  
58 similar programs intended to protect and enhance the recovery of  
59 the manatee and other species of marine mammals.

60 (b) By December 1 each year, the Fish and Wildlife  
61 Conservation Commission shall provide the President of the  
62 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a written  
63 report, enumerating the amounts and purposes for which all  
64 proceeds in the Save the Manatee Trust Fund for the previous  
65 fiscal year are expended, in a manner consistent with those  
66 recovery tasks enumerated within the manatee recovery plan as  
67 required by the Endangered Species Act.

68 (c) When the federal and state governments remove the  
69 manatee from status as an endangered or threatened species, the  
70 annual allocation may be reduced.

71 (d) Up to 10 percent of the annual use fee deposited in  
72 the Save the Manatee Trust Fund from the sale of the manatee  
73 license plate authorized in s. 320.08058 may be used to promote  
74 and market the license plate issued by the Department of Highway  
75 Safety and Motor Vehicles after June 30, 2007.

76 Section 3. Section 379.2434, Florida Statutes, is created  
77 to read:

78 379.2434 Manatee speed zone effectiveness study; manatee

79 distribution and abundance survey and report.—

80 (1) The commission shall contract with an independent,  
81 qualified party to conduct a study evaluating the effectiveness  
82 of manatee speed zones including if, and to what extent, risks  
83 to manatees are reduced by such zones. The commission shall  
84 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate,  
85 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1,  
86 2019, detailing the findings of the study.

87 (2) By July 1, 2018, the commission shall conduct a  
88 statewide manatee distribution and abundance survey and report.

89 (a) The survey and report must achieve a scientifically  
90 reliable population estimate.

91 (b) The commission may repeat, as necessary to determine  
92 best practices, the statewide manatee distribution and abundance  
93 survey and report until at least July 1, 2026.

94 (3) To provide additional funding for the speed zone  
95 effectiveness study and the manatee distribution and abundance  
96 surveys and reports, the Save the Manatee Trust Fund is exempted  
97 until July 1, 2026, from the requirement to contribute a service  
98 charge to the General Revenue Fund under s. 215.20. Funds  
99 required to implement the study, surveys, and reports may be  
100 appropriated from the Save the Manatee Trust Fund to the extent  
101 that funding is not available from other sources.

102 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.