

By Senator Brandes

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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:

26
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):

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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
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

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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 the
72 Save the Manatee Trust Fund from the sale of the manatee license
73 plate authorized in s. 320.08058 may be used to promote and
74 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.

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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.