

By Senator Farmer

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to coral reefs; defining terms;
3 establishing the Southeast Florida Coral Reef
4 Ecosystem Protection Area; requiring the Coral Reef
5 Conservation Program, in coordination with the Fish
6 and Wildlife Conservation Commission, to develop a
7 comprehensive management plan for the area using and
8 building on previous stakeholder engagement and public
9 comment; requiring the reef program and commission to
10 seek public comment on the proposed plan; providing
11 requirements for the plan; requiring the Department of
12 Environmental Protection to submit the proposed plan
13 to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement
14 Trust Fund; providing an effective date.

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

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18 Section 1. Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem
19 Protection Area.—

20 (1) As used in this section, the term:

21 (a) "Commission" means the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
22 Commission.

23 (b) "Department" means the Department of Environmental
24 Protection.

25 (c) "Protection area" means the Southeast Florida Coral
26 Reef Ecosystem Protection Area established in this section.

27 (d) "Reef program" means the Department of Environmental
28 Protection's Coral Reef Conservation Program.

29 (2) There is established the Southeast Florida Coral Reef

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30 Ecosystem Protection Area. The protection area shall consist of
31 the sovereignty submerged lands and state waters offshore of
32 Broward, Martin, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach Counties from St.
33 Lucie Inlet to the northern boundary of the Biscayne National
34 Park.

35 (3) The reef program, in partnership with the commission,
36 shall, by December 31, 2018, develop a comprehensive management
37 plan for the protection area.

38 (4) The reef program, in developing the comprehensive
39 management plan along with the commission, shall include and
40 build on previous stakeholder engagement in and public comment
41 on the reef program which were solicited through the Southeast
42 Florida Coral Reef Initiative, the Southeast Florida Coastal
43 Ocean Taskforce, the reef program Technical Advisory Committee,
44 the Our Florida Reefs Community Working Groups, and other
45 efforts. The reef program, in coordination with the commission,
46 shall solicit public comment on its proposed comprehensive
47 management plan and hold public hearings throughout Southeast
48 Florida before submitting its proposed comprehensive management
49 plan to the department.

50 (5) (a) The portion of the comprehensive management plan
51 which is led by the reef program must include measures to
52 improve the coral reef ecosystem of the protection area,
53 including:

54 1. Improvement of water quality, reef fish assemblages, and
55 the coral reef and its associated habitats; and

56 2. Reduction of cumulative impacts of the multiple
57 stressors on the coral reef and its associated habitats.

58 (b) The commission shall lead the portion of the

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59 comprehensive management plan which addresses fisheries
60 management.

61 (6) By March 1, 2019, the department shall submit the
62 proposed comprehensive management plan to the Board of Trustees
63 of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund for adoption.

64 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.