

By Senator Mayfield

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Florida National Estuary
3 Program Act; creating s. 373.45941, F.S.; providing
4 legislative findings; providing that partnering with
5 the Federal Government and local governments to
6 protect specified water resources is an important
7 state interest; requiring the Department of
8 Environmental Protection to give funding consideration
9 to the conservation and management of specified
10 estuaries identified under the National Estuary
11 Program; requiring that funds be used for specified
12 projects; requiring each program receiving funding to
13 prepare an annual report and submit the report to the
14 Governor, the Legislature, the department, and the
15 respective water management districts; specifying
16 requirements for the report; providing an effective
17 date.

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

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21 Section 1. Section 373.45941, Florida Statutes, is created
22 to read:

23 373.45941 Florida National Estuary Program Act.—

24 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds that:

25 (a) Estuaries in the state designated as estuaries of
26 national significance by the United States Congress provide
27 diverse ecologically and economically productive habitats that
28 support many wildlife populations, such as migratory birds,
29 commercially valuable fish species, shellfish, and other species

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30 that depend on estuarine environments;

31 (b) Significant water quality issues in the state arising
32 from increased pollution from stormwater and agricultural
33 runoff, wastewater discharges, industrial pollution, and
34 commercial and recreational waste are degrading the state's
35 estuaries of national significance;

36 (c) Estuaries of national significance identified under the
37 National Estuary Program are governed and funded by federal,
38 state, and local governmental entities, including the department
39 and the respective water management districts;

40 (d) The natural resource protection and restoration efforts
41 of the National Estuary Program provide substantial public
42 health and economic benefits to the state, including its real
43 estate and tourism sectors;

44 (e) The state's estuaries of national significance
45 encompass 50 percent of its coastline and a large proportion of
46 its population and are economically, environmentally, and
47 socially defined by some of the state's most important and
48 vulnerable water resources; and

49 (f) There is an important state interest in partnering with
50 the Federal Government and local governments to protect the
51 water resources of the National Estuary Program water bodies in
52 this state identified in paragraph (2) (a) through restoration
53 priorities identified in their respective adopted comprehensive
54 conservation and management plans.

55 (2) FUNDING.-

56 (a) The department shall give funding consideration to the
57 conservation and management of the following programs identified
58 under the National Estuary Program and designated pursuant to s.

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59 320 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. s. 1330:

60 1. Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program.

61 2. Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership.

62 3. Tampa Bay Estuary Program.

63 4. Sarasota Bay Estuary Program.

64 (b) Funds provided pursuant to paragraph (a) must be used
65 for projects identified in the program's adopted comprehensive
66 conservation and management plan, including, but not limited to,
67 projects that:

68 1. Improve water quality;

69 2. Improve fisheries and natural habitats;

70 3. Enhance resiliency and protect human health, safety, and
71 welfare;

72 4. Monitor environmental conditions to determine trends and
73 project success;

74 5. Promote technology innovation and pilot projects that
75 support such innovations; or

76 6. Enhance coastal economies and quality of life.

77 (3) ANNUAL REPORT.-

78 (a) Each National Estuary Program receiving recurring
79 dedicated state funding shall, in coordination with its
80 respective county and municipal governments, prepare a
81 comprehensive annual report for water and habitat resource
82 projects identified for state funding consideration within its
83 jurisdictions. At a minimum, the report must include the:

84 1. Funds expended on each listed project in the fiscal year
85 and the total estimated cost of each project;

86 2. Estimated completion date of each listed project;

87 3. Source and amount of financial assistance provided by

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88 county or municipal governments, water management districts, or
89 other entities for each listed project; and

90 4. Implementation status of each project that has received
91 state funding but has not been completed.

92 (b) By January 1 of each year, each National Estuary
93 Program receiving recurring dedicated state funding shall submit
94 its comprehensive annual report to the Governor, the President
95 of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the
96 department, and the appropriate water management districts.

97 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.