

By Senator Berman

31-00467-20

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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to a *Sargassum* Seaweed Matching Grant  
3       Program; creating s. 403.926, F.S.; requiring the  
4       Department of Environmental Protection to establish a  
5       *Sargassum* Seaweed Matching Grant Program for a  
6       specified purpose; requiring the department to adopt  
7       rules to govern the program; requiring the department  
8       to submit an annual report to the Governor and the  
9       Legislature by a specified date; providing an  
10      effective date.

11  
12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

13  
14       Section 1. Section 403.926, Florida Statutes, is created to  
15      read:

16       403.926 *Sargassum* Seaweed Matching Grant Program; financial  
17      assistance to local governments.-

18       (1) The Department of Environmental Protection shall  
19      develop a *Sargassum* Seaweed Matching Grant Program to provide  
20      annual grants, subject to legislative appropriation, to  
21      qualified local governmental entities to fund projects related  
22      to the buildup of *Sargassum* seaweed in their coastal  
23      communities.

24       (2) The department shall adopt, by rule, procedures to  
25      govern the program which, at a minimum, do all of the following:

26       (a) Provide a selection process designed to maximize the  
27      benefit to the public.

28       (b) Require that each grant for a project described in this  
29      section include a minimum of a 50 percent local match of funds.

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30       (c) Require that a grant recipient comply with the Dennis  
31 L. Jones Beach and Shore Preservation Act and any other rules  
32 established by the department regarding beach cleanup.

33       (3) Beginning January 1, 2021, and each January 1  
34 thereafter, the department shall submit a report regarding the  
35 projects funded pursuant to this section to the Governor, the  
36 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
37 Representatives.

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