

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government

BILL: SB 588

INTRODUCER: Senators Book and Ausley

SUBJECT: Conservation Area Designations/Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area

DATE: February 16, 2021

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Anderson</u>	<u>Rogers</u>	<u>EN</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Reagan</u>	<u>Betta</u>	<u>AEG</u>	Recommend: Favorable
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

I. Summary:

SB 588 designates the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area as the “Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area.”

The Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area was established in 2018 and consists of sovereignty submerged lands and state waters offshore of Broward, Martin, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach Counties from the St. Lucie Inlet to the northern boundary of the Biscayne National Park.

The bill directs the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to erect suitable markers designating the conservation area.

The estimated cost to erect the designated markers required under this bill is indeterminate but can be absorbed within existing resources of the DEP.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2021.

II. Present Situation:

Coral Reefs

Coral reefs in southeast Florida support a rich and diverse assemblage of stony corals, octocorals, macroalgae, sponges, and fishes.¹ Florida’s coral reef stretches for over 350 miles, from the St. Lucie Inlet in Martin County past Key West to the Dry Tortugas.² It is the only coral reef system

¹ Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), *Coral Reef Conservation Program*, <https://floridadep.gov/rcp/coral> (last visited Jan. 22, 2021).

² Florida’s Coral Reef, *Conserving Florida’s Coral Reef*, <https://floridascoralreef.org/> (last visited Jan. 22, 2021).

in the continental United States and is home to over 40 species of reef-building corals that provide shelter, food, and breeding sites for millions of plants and animals.³

Coral reefs are valuable natural resources. They protect coastlines by reducing wave energy from storms and hurricanes. They serve as a source of food and shelter and provide critical habitat for over 6,000 species, including commercially important fisheries.⁴ Many medicines, as well as other health and beauty products, are derived from marine plants, algae, and animals found on coral reefs.

People use coral reefs as a resource for recreation, education, scientific research, and public inspiration. Millions of tourists and local residents enjoy scuba diving, snorkeling, and fishing on Florida's coral reefs. These activities provide a source of income for the state and its coastal communities. The natural and artificial reefs along Southeast Florida and the Florida Keys along generate \$6.3 billion in sales and income, and sustain more than 71,000 jobs annually.⁵

Florida Coral Reef Conservation Program

The Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) within the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection of the DEP manages the northern section of the reef, from the St. Lucie Inlet to the northern border of Biscayne National Park.⁶ The CRCP coordinates research and monitoring, develops management strategies, and promotes partnerships to protect the coral reefs, hardbottom communities, and associated reef resources of southeast Florida.⁷

The CRCP implements and coordinates the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI). The SEFCRI identifies and implements priority actions needed to reduce key threats to coral reef resources in southeast Florida, through a local action strategy for collaborative action among government and non-governmental partners.⁸

³ *Id.*

⁴ DEP, *Coral Reef Conservation Program*, <https://floridadep.gov/rcp/coral> (last visited Jan. 22, 2021); DEP, *Coral Reef Conservation Program 2020-2025 Strategic Plan*, 3 available at https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/CRCP%20Strategic%20Plan%202020-2025_FINAL_508%20compliant.pdf.

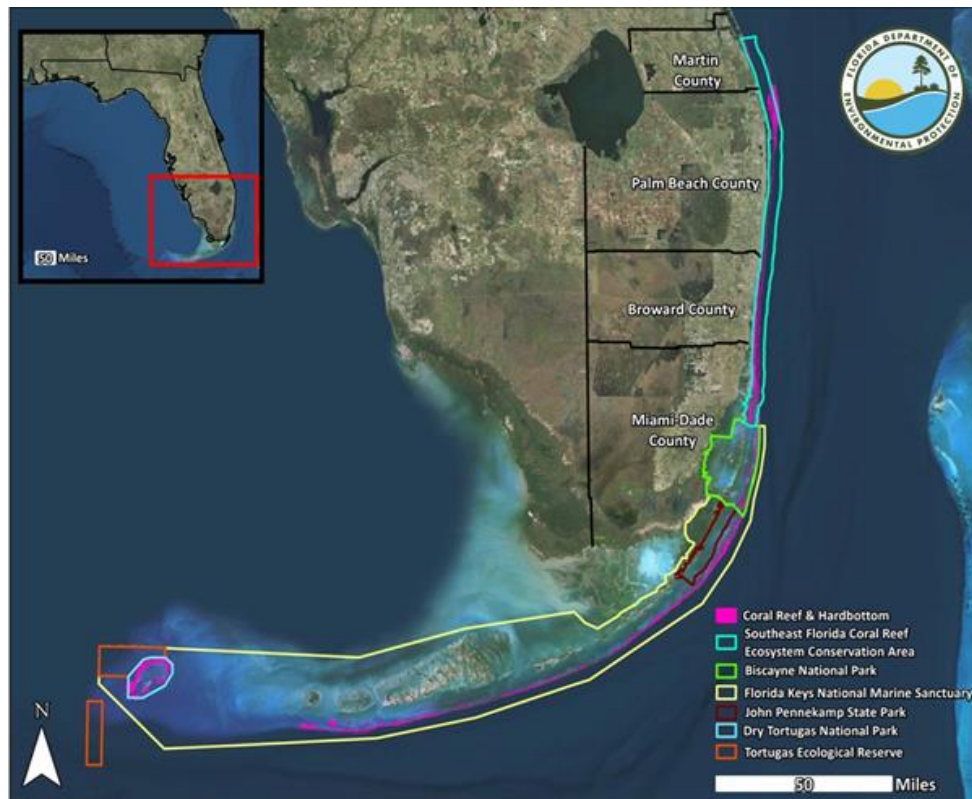
⁵ DEP, *Coral Reef Conservation Program 2020-2025 Strategic Plan* at 3.

⁶ DEP, *Coral Reef Conservation Program*, <https://floridadep.gov/rcp/coral> (last visited Jan. 22, 2021).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI), *What is SEFCRI?*, <https://southeastfloridareefs.net/who-we-are/> (last visited Jan. 22, 2021).

Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area



The Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area, formerly referred to as the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative Region, was officially established on July 1, 2018.⁹ The conservation area shown in the map above¹⁰ includes the sovereign submerged lands and state waters offshore of Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties from the northern boundary of the Biscayne National Park to the St. Lucie Inlet.¹¹

The Florida Keys portion of the reef is recognized and protected by management plans of Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, National Parks, and National Wildlife Refuges.¹² Prior to the designation of the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area, the northern portion of the reef was unprotected and lacked a state-adopted management plan for its future sustainability and conservation.¹³ This section of the reef is affected by extremely high year-round usage and water quality degradation.

⁹ Chapter 2018-30, Laws of Fla.

¹⁰ DEP, *Coral ECA: Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area*, <https://floridadep.gov/rcp/coral/content/coral-eca-southeast-florida-coral-reef-ecosystem-conservation-area> (last visited Jan. 22, 2021).

¹¹ Chapter 2018-30, Laws of Fla.

¹² DEP, *Coral ECA: Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area*, <https://floridadep.gov/rcp/coral/content/coral-eca-southeast-florida-coral-reef-ecosystem-conservation-area> (last visited Jan. 22, 2021).

¹³ *Id.*

Kristin Jacobs

Kristin Jacobs was a member of the Florida House of Representatives, representing District 96 in Broward County, from 2014 until her passing in 2020. She was the prime sponsor of House Bill 53 in 2018, which established the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area.¹⁴ Prior to her time in the Legislature, she served as Broward County Commissioner for 16 years and Mayor of Broward County for two terms and was twice chosen by the President of the United States to serve on national task forces dealing with climate resiliency and ocean protection.¹⁵ Representative Jacobs was known as a “tireless advocate for Florida’s environment, wildlife, and families.”¹⁶ She was also one of the original signers and champions of the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact.¹⁷ Representative Jacobs passed away on April 11, 2020.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill designates the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area as the “Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area.”

The bill directs the DEP to erect suitable markers designating the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2021.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

¹⁴ Chapter 2018-30, Laws of Fla.

¹⁵ Florida House of Representatives, *Kristin Diane Jacobs*,

<https://myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/details.aspx?MemberId=4613&LegislativeTermId=88> (last visited Jan. 22, 2021); Southeast Florida Regional Compact for Climate Change (Compact), *Remembering Kristin Jacobs* available at <http://createsend.com/t/-19A118D31C20C57E2540EF23F30FEDED> (last visited Feb. 11, 2021).

¹⁶ Florida House of Representatives, Speaker Jose R. Oliva, *In Memoriam Representative Kristin Diane Jacobs 1959-2020* (Apr. 11, 2020) (on file with the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources).

¹⁷ Compact, *Remembering Kristin Jacobs*.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The estimated cost to erect the designated markers required under the bill is indeterminate at this time. However, the agency can absorb this cost within existing resources.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates an undesignated section of law.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.