

By Senator Ausley

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the Office of the Blue Economy;  
3           amending s. 20.60, F.S.; establishing the office  
4           within the Department of Economic Opportunity;  
5           creating s. 288.93, F.S.; defining the term "blue  
6           economy"; providing duties of the office; authorizing  
7           the department to adopt rules; amending s. 403.928,  
8           F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the  
9           act; creating s. 403.9303, F.S.; requiring the Office  
10          of Economic and Demographic Research to conduct a  
11          biennial evaluation of the blue economy for inclusion  
12          in a certain assessment; providing requirements for  
13          the evaluation; providing an effective date.

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

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17           Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section  
18          20.60, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

19           20.60 Department of Economic Opportunity; creation; powers  
20          and duties.—

21           (3) (a) The following divisions and offices of the  
22          Department of Economic Opportunity are established:

- 23           1. The Division of Strategic Business Development.  
24           2. The Division of Community Development.  
25           3. The Division of Workforce Services.  
26           4. The Division of Finance and Administration.  
27           5. The Division of Information Technology.  
28           6. The Office of the Secretary.  
29           7. The Office of Economic Accountability and Transparency,

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30 which shall:

31 a. Oversee the department's critical objectives as  
32 determined by the secretary and make sure that the department's  
33 key objectives are clearly communicated to the public.

34 b. Organize department resources, expertise, data, and  
35 research to focus on and solve the complex economic challenges  
36 facing the state.

37 c. Provide leadership for the department's priority issues  
38 that require integration of policy, management, and critical  
39 objectives from multiple programs and organizations internal and  
40 external to the department; and organize and manage external  
41 communication on such priority issues.

42 d. Promote and facilitate key department initiatives to  
43 address priority economic issues and explore data and identify  
44 opportunities for innovative approaches to address such economic  
45 issues.

46 e. Promote strategic planning for the department.

47 8. The Office of the Blue Economy.

48 Section 2. Section 288.93, Florida Statutes, is created to  
49 read:

50 288.93 Office of the Blue Economy.—

51 (1) For purposes of this section, the term "blue economy"  
52 means the economic uses of ocean and coastal resources with a  
53 focus on sustainable practices that benefit the long-term  
54 outlook of relevant industry sectors and the competitive  
55 positioning of the state in a global economy affected by climate  
56 change, including, but not limited to, maritime industries such  
57 as shipyards, marinas, marine terminals, piers, fishing,  
58 aquaculture, seafood processing, commercial diving, and marine

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59 transportation; floating and amphibious housing; tourism; and  
60 outdoor recreational activities, including, but not limited to,  
61 boating, and industry sectors dependent on such activities.

62 (2) The Office of the Blue Economy shall:

63 (a) Support the state's economy by connecting the state's  
64 ocean and coastal resources to economic development strategies  
65 that enhance or contribute to the blue economy with a focus on  
66 research and development, technological innovation, emerging  
67 industries, strategic business recruitment, public and private  
68 funding opportunities, and workforce training and education.

69 (b) Survey state universities and Florida College System  
70 institutions on the development of academic research relating to  
71 the blue economy across all disciplines. The office shall  
72 encourage collaboration between state universities and Florida  
73 College System institutions with overlapping areas of academic  
74 research. The office shall publish on the department's website  
75 information on such collaboration and the current research  
76 inventory.

77 (c) Collaborate with relevant industries to identify  
78 economic challenges that may be solved through innovation in the  
79 blue economy by commercializing or otherwise providing public  
80 access to academic research and resources.

81 (d) Develop and facilitate a pipeline of academic research,  
82 commercialization, accelerator programs, and start-up funding.

83 (e) Publish on the department's website reports on the  
84 number, growth, and average wages of jobs included in the blue  
85 economy. Such reports shall identify and address any relevant  
86 labor shortages projected by the Labor Market Estimating  
87 Conference pursuant to s. 216.136(7).

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88 (f) Educate other state and local entities on the interests  
89 of the blue economy by participating in the development and  
90 implementation of policies relating to the state's use of ocean  
91 and coastal resources, including, but not limited to, long-term  
92 sustainability, best practices, conservation efforts, ocean and  
93 coastal health, restoration and protection of coral reefs, and  
94 beach renourishment.

95 (g) Communicate the state's role as an integral component  
96 of the blue economy by promoting the state on national and  
97 international platforms and other appropriate forums as the  
98 premier destination for convening on pertinent subject matters.

99 (3) The department may adopt rules to administer this  
100 section.

101 Section 3. Paragraph (f) is added to subsection (1) of  
102 section 403.928, Florida Statutes, to read:

103 403.928 Assessment of water resources and conservation  
104 lands.—The Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall  
105 conduct an annual assessment of Florida's water resources and  
106 conservation lands.

107 (1) WATER RESOURCES.—The assessment must include all of the  
108 following:

109 (f) Biennially, beginning on January 1, 2023, the  
110 evaluation of the state's blue economy required under s.  
111 403.9303.

112 Section 4. Section 403.9303, Florida Statutes, is created  
113 to read:

114 403.9303 Blue economy evaluation.—

115 (1) Beginning January 1, 2023, the Office of Economic and  
116 Demographic Research shall conduct a biennial evaluation of the

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117 state's blue economy for inclusion in its annual assessment  
118 conducted pursuant to s. 403.928.

119 (2) The evaluation must include the following:

120 (a) The historical and current contributions to the state's  
121 economy from maritime industries, including, but not limited to:

122 1. Shipyards, marinas, marine terminals, piers, fishing,  
123 aquaculture, seafood processing, commercial diving, and marine  
124 transportation.

125 2. Floating and amphibious housing.

126 3. Tourism.

127 4. Outdoor recreational activities, including, but not  
128 limited to, boating, and industry sectors dependent on such  
129 activities.

130 (b) Appropriate economic comparisons to other states to  
131 identify comparative advantages and disadvantages.

132 (c) The identification and discussion of any growing,  
133 emerging, or new industries that fit within the blue economy  
134 structure.

135 (d) Beginning January 1, 2025, an analysis of the  
136 contributions of the blue economy to the state, including, but  
137 not limited to, the economic benefits, as defined in s.  
138 288.005(1), of the efforts undertaken by the Office of the Blue  
139 Economy pursuant to s. 288.93.

140 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.