

The Florida Senate  
**HOUSE MESSAGE SUMMARY**

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

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BILL: CS/CS/SB 494

INTRODUCER: Appropriations; Environment and Natural Resources; and Senator Hutson

SUBJECT: Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

DATE: March 4, 2022

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**I. Amendments Contained in Message:**

**House Amendment – 031891**

**II. Summary of Amendments Contained in Message:**

**House Amendment – 031891** deletes provisions allowing state lands to be used as gopher tortoise recipient sites if there are fewer than three permitted private recipient sites available for gopher tortoise relocations, and directing FWC to work with each state land management agency to identify at least nine feasible recipient sites on state lands.

The amendment deletes language explaining the recipient site permit application and approval process. It adds legislative recognition of geographical and capacity constraints on recipient sites, increased demand, and the dependency of gopher tortoise conservation success on privately and publicly owned lands.

The amendment directs the lead land management agency to evaluate the economic feasibility of establishing a recipient site.

The amendment authorizes landowners to establish a recipient site or conservation bank where a conservation easement or other less-than-fee interest has been acquired by the board, a state agency, or a regional or local government, as long as the recipient site or conservation bank does not interfere with the management plan for the conservation easement and the landowner complies with all state and federal permitting requirements.

The amendment directs FWC to streamline and improve the review of recipient site applications. The amendment directs FWC to establish an ongoing effort to encourage new recipient sites on private lands and create an online dashboard to assist with efficient relocation efforts.

The amendment directs FWC to submit a report by February 1, 2023 to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives that includes: progress made in establishing new recipient sites; average time it takes to approve or deny a recipient site application; any federal action taken to modify the gopher tortoise listing under the Endangered Species Act; and any other information relevant to gopher tortoise conservation programs.