

26 403.93344 Seagrass Restoration Technology Development
 27 Initiative; Initiative Technology Advisory Council.-

28 (1) It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a
 29 collaborative and coordinated effort among public and private
 30 research entities to develop restoration technologies and
 31 approaches to address the loss of seagrass and the cascading
 32 ecological and economic impacts of that loss to communities in
 33 this state.

34 (2) As used in this section, the term:

35 (a) "Department" means the Department of Environmental
 36 Protection.

37 (b) "Initiative" means the Seagrass Restoration Technology
 38 Development Initiative.

39 (c) "Program" means the Aquatic Reserve Program within the
 40 department's Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection.

41 (3) The Seagrass Restoration Technology Development
 42 Initiative is established within the department as a partnership
 43 between the program, Mote Marine Laboratory, and the University
 44 of Florida.

45 (a) The purpose of the initiative is to take the lead in
 46 and expedite the development of innovative technologies and
 47 approaches that are critically needed to restore coastal
 48 seagrass ecosystems by building upon research and restoration
 49 efforts in the public and private sectors.

50 (b) The goal of the initiative is to develop, test, and

51 implement innovative, effective, and environmentally sustainable
52 technologies and approaches for restoring coastal seagrass
53 ecosystems.

54 (c) The department shall award funds specifically
55 appropriated by the Legislature for the initiative to Mote
56 Marine Laboratory, which shall function as the lead
57 administrative component to achieve the goals of the initiative.

58 1. Mote Marine Laboratory may, with the concurrence of the
59 department, use a portion of the awarded funds to facilitate
60 additional engagement with other pertinent marine science and
61 technology development organizations in this state and around
62 the world to pursue applied research and technology for the
63 successful restoration of seagrass ecosystems.

64 2. Mote Marine Laboratory may not use more than 5 percent
65 of its awarded funds for direct annual initiative administration
66 and coordination costs.

67 3. The initiative shall leverage state-appropriated funds
68 with additional funds from private and federal sources.

69 (d) In collaboration with the program, Mote Marine
70 Laboratory and the University of Florida shall create a 10-year
71 Florida Seagrass Restoration Plan to implement tools and
72 technologies developed under the initiative.

73 (e) Beginning January 15, 2024, and each January 15
74 thereafter until its expiration, the initiative shall submit a
75 report that contains an overview of its accomplishments to date

76 and priorities for subsequent years to the Governor, the
 77 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
 78 Representatives, the Secretary of Environmental Protection, and
 79 the executive director of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
 80 Commission.

81 (4) The Initiative Technology Advisory Council, an
 82 advisory council as defined in s. 20.03(7), is established as
 83 part of the initiative. The advisory council's membership must
 84 include marine science, technology development, and natural
 85 resource management representatives from this state's aquatic
 86 preserves, private organizations, and public or private research
 87 institutions. The council shall meet at least twice annually.

88 (a) The council shall be co-chaired by the president and
 89 chief executive officer of Mote Marine Laboratory and a
 90 representative from the University of Florida and shall be
 91 composed of the following members:

92 1. One member from a private commercial enterprise,
 93 appointed by the Governor.

94 2. One member from a public or private university in this
 95 state, appointed by the President of the Senate.

96 3. One member from a non-university public or private
 97 marine environmental organization, appointed by the Speaker of
 98 the House of Representatives.

99 4. One member from the program who has expertise in
 100 seagrass ecosystems, appointed by the Secretary of Environmental

HB 1181

2023

101 Protection.

102 5. One member from the Fish and Wildlife Research
103 Institute who has expertise in seagrass, appointed by the
104 executive director of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
105 Commission.

106 (b) Council members shall serve staggered 2-year terms and
107 may be reappointed.

108 (c) Council members shall serve without compensation, and
109 each organization represented shall cover all expenses of its
110 respective representative.

111 (5) This section expires June 30, 2028.

112 Section 2. Beginning in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, and for
113 each fiscal year thereafter through the 2027-2028 fiscal year,
114 there is appropriated the sum of \$2 million from the General
115 Revenue Fund to the Department of Environmental Protection for
116 the purpose of implementing s. 403.93344, Florida Statutes.

117 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.