

**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.)

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

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BILL: SB 76

INTRODUCER: Senator Hooper and others

SUBJECT: State Park Campsite Reservations

DATE: March 13, 2023

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Barriero</u>	<u>Rogers</u>	<u>EN</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	<u>Reagan</u>	<u>Betta</u>	<u>AEG</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>FP</u>	_____

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## I. Summary:

SB 76 allows Florida residents to reserve state park campsites one month before nonresidents. Specifically, the bill requires the Division of Recreation and Parks of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to allow Florida residents to reserve state park campsites, including RV sites, up to 12 months in advance, and up to 11 months in advance for nonresidents. Florida residents must provide proof of residency (a Florida driver license or identification card) on the reservation website and upon check-in for reservations made more than 11 months in advance.

The DEP may incur expenditures to update its reservation website but this can be absorbed within existing resources.

## II. Present Situation:

### Florida State Parks

Florida residents and visitors from around the world are drawn to the state's 175 award-winning<sup>1</sup> parks, spanning nearly 800,000 acres and 100 miles of coastline.<sup>2</sup> During fiscal year 2021-2022, over 32 million people visited our state parks.<sup>3</sup> While approximately 75 percent of those visitors

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<sup>1</sup> Florida is the first state to win four National Gold Medals (in 1999, 2005, 2013, and 2019) for the best state park system. See, DEP, *Florida State Parks: 2019 National Gold Medal Winner*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/learn/2019-national-gold-medal-winner#:~:text=On%20Tuesday%2C%20September%2024%2C%20the%20National%20Recreation%20and,the%20nation%20to%20win%20a%20fourth%20Gold%20Medal> (last visited Jan. 6, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> DEP, *Division of Recreation and Parks*, <https://floridadep.gov/parks> (last visited Jan. 6, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> DEP, *2021-2022 Economic Impact Assessment Report for the Florida State Park System*, available at <https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/2022%20Economic%20Impact%20Assessment%20Report%20FINAL%209.26.22.pdf>.

were “non-local,” meaning they traveled from more than 50 miles away,<sup>4</sup> Florida residents have, on average, made up 61 percent of all overnight visitors.<sup>5</sup>

Florida state parks offer a variety of camping options:

- Fifty-six state parks offer campgrounds, 52 of which have amenities specifically for RV campers.<sup>6</sup> Full-facility campsites for tent and RV campers include water, electricity, a grill and picnic table, as well as centralized showers, restrooms, and dump stations.<sup>7</sup>
- Twenty-eight state parks provide primitive campgrounds. These sites have limited improvements, such as a fire ring and a cleared area for tent camping, but generally have no electric power, and may or may not have potable water or bathroom facilities and are typically accessible by foot, bicycle, or canoe/kayak only.<sup>8</sup>
- Nineteen state parks offer cabins,<sup>9</sup> with options varying from fully equipped modern cabins with kitchens, fireplaces, and screened porches to more primitive hand-hewn, lumber, or palm-log cabins.<sup>10</sup>
- Eighteen state parks offer camping for equestrians and their horses.<sup>11</sup> Amenities vary by park and range from ride-in primitive sites to areas suitable for rigs.<sup>12</sup> Some equestrian campsites include paddocks or stable facilities and restrooms with showers.<sup>13</sup>
- Seven state parks offer glamping (glamorous camping), which includes a canvas tent, a queen bed with linens, a seating area, device charging stations, and a cooling and heating unit.<sup>14</sup> Glamping reservations are booked through third-party vendors.
- Six state parks provide boat slips with water and electricity. Boaters have access to park restrooms, showers, pump-outs, and other amenities. Boaters can also anchor overnight at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park and John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See *id.* at 3. This percentage is from the 2006 Florida State Park Visitor Study. *Id.* See also DEP, *2016-2017 Economic Impact Assessment for the Florida Park System* at 4, available at <https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Economic%20Impact%20Assessment%202016-2017.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Plan Your Visit: Frequently Asked Questions* (no. 24), <https://www.floridastateparks.org/plan-your-visit/faqs> (last visited Jan. 6, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Find A Park*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails?parks%5B0%5D=experiences%3A242> (last visited Jan. 6, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Stay the Night*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/index.php/stay-night> (last visited Jan. 6, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Primitive Camping*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/primitive-camping> (last visited Jan. 9, 2023).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks Camping and Cabins Guide*, at 4, available at [https://www.floridastateparks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/2021\\_CampingCabinsGuide\\_Reservation%20Prices%20Update.pdf](https://www.floridastateparks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/2021_CampingCabinsGuide_Reservation%20Prices%20Update.pdf) (last visited Jan. 6, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Equestrian Camping*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/equestrian-camping> (last visited Jan. 9, 2023).

<sup>12</sup> A camping rig is defined as combinations of vehicles, trailers, tents, and/or hammocks. DEP, *Florida State Parks: Reservation Information*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/reservation-information> (last visited Jan. 10, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Equestrian Camping*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/equestrian-camping> (last visited Jan. 9, 2023).

<sup>14</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Let's Go Glamping*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/index.php/learn/lets-go-glamping> (last visited Jan. 9, 2023).

<sup>15</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Boat Camping*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/boat-camping> (last visited Jan. 9, 2023).

## Camping Reservations

Florida state parks<sup>16</sup> allow visitors to make reservations up to 11 months in advance, either by phone or online.<sup>17</sup> This booking window applies to both Florida residents and nonresidents. New dates become available daily at 8:00 a.m.<sup>18</sup> Any new sites that become available throughout the day due to a cancellation are randomly released back into inventory following the cancellation.<sup>19</sup>

The maximum length of stay for a single reservation is 14 nights total. After 14 nights, visitors must leave the park for at least three nights before returning for a new stay. Based on availability and once the camper is registered and on-site, the park manager or designee may at their discretion extend a camper's current stay up to an additional 14 nights. Maximum continuous length of stay in any one park is 28 nights. Campers are permitted up to 56 nights of total occupancy in any one park in each six-month period, defined as October 1 - March 31, and April 1 - September 30. All campsites or cabins not reserved or occupied may be rented to walk-in visitors on a first-come, first-served basis.<sup>20</sup>

Campsite fees and rental rates vary by park and are generally the same for residents and nonresidents.<sup>21</sup> Only certain Florida citizens—those who are 65 years of age or older, disabled, or who operate a licensed family foster home—are eligible for a discount (50 percent).<sup>22</sup> Recipients of such discounts must provide proof of eligibility.<sup>23</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

**Section 1** amends s. 258.014, F.S., to require the DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks to allow individuals to use the division's website to reserve state park campsites, including RV sites, as follows:

- For Florida residents, reservations up to 12 months in advance; and
- For nonresidents, reservations up to 11 months in advance.

A Florida resident who wishes to book a campsite more than 11 months in advance must provide proof of residency (a valid Florida driver license or identification card issued under

<sup>16</sup> Notably, some *county* parks allow advance reservations for residents. For example, Brevard County, Palm Beach County, and Fort De Soto Park in Pinellas County allow in-county residents to make reservations before nonresidents. *See* Brevard County Parks, *Parks & Recreation Online Portal Search*, <https://registration.brevardfl.gov/wbws/wbws/search.html?module=RN&primarycode=LONGP> (last visited Jan. 5, 2023); Palm Beach County, *Parks & Recreation: Campground Reservations*, <https://discover.pbccgov.org/parks/CampingJohnPrincePark/CamperInformation.aspx> (last visited Jan. 5, 2023); Pinellas County Parks, *Campsite & Picnic Shelter Reservation System*, <https://secure.rec1.com/FL/pinellas-county-fl/catalog> (last visited Jan. 5, 2023).

<sup>17</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Reservation Information*, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/reservation-information> (last visited Jan. 3, 2023).

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> DEP, *Florida State Parks: Fee Schedule*, available at [https://www.floridastateparks.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021\\_05\\_10%20FSP%20Fee%20Schedule%2005.2022.pdf](https://www.floridastateparks.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021_05_10%20FSP%20Fee%20Schedule%2005.2022.pdf) (last visited Jan. 10, 2023).

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* *See also* section 258.016, F.S.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

s. 322.051, F.S.), on the reservation website and upon check-in. The bill also makes technical changes.

**Section 2** provides an effective date of July 1, 2023.

**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.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The DEP may incur expenditures to update its reservation website but this can be absorbed within existing resources.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

The bill applies to “reservations for state park campsites, including RV sites.” However, it may be unclear whether this includes reservations for all campground amenities, such as cabins, glamping sites, and boat camping/slips.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 258.014 of the Florida Statutes.

**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.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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