

By Senator Rodriguez

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to carbon sequestration; creating s.
3 403.945, F.S.; defining terms; providing legislative
4 findings; creating the Carbon Sequestration Task Force
5 adjunct to the Department of Environmental Protection;
6 providing for task force membership, meetings, and
7 duties; requiring the task force to submit specified
8 reports to the Secretary of Environmental Protection
9 and to the Governor and the Legislature by specified
10 dates; providing for expiration of the task force;
11 providing an appropriation; providing an effective
12 date.

13
14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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16 Section 1. Section 403.945, Florida Statutes, is created to
17 read:

18 403.945 Carbon Sequestration Task Force.—

19 (1) As used in this section, the term:

20 (a) "Blue carbon" means carbon sequestered by marine and
21 coastal ecosystems.

22 (b) "Carbon sequestration" means the long-term storage of
23 carbon in plants, soils, geologic formations, and the ocean
24 through land and aquatic habitat management.

25 (2) The Legislature finds that:

26 (a) Maintaining coastal and freshwater wetlands, nearshore
27 and offshore aquatic ecosystems, conservation lands, healthy and
28 sustainable agriculture, shellfish aquaculture, and timber and
29 silvicultural industries is vital to the state's economy,

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30 environment, and natural resources, including significant
31 environmental contributions to water quality and quantity, air
32 purification, carbon sequestration, blue carbon, coastal
33 resilience, and habitat for threatened and endangered wildlife.

34 (b) The continued expansion of urban sprawl and the
35 development of coastal areas have led to losses of the state's
36 natural and agricultural lands and decreases in water quality
37 and quantity that have harmed coastal ecosystems and industries,
38 including imperiled wetlands, coral reefs, seagrasses, and
39 shellfish aquaculture.

40 (c) To ensure healthy and sustainable agriculture,
41 shellfish aquaculture and silvicultural industries, and natural
42 and working lands and waters, a statewide program is necessary
43 to provide incentives for landowners and managers to continue
44 activities and land uses that sequester carbon.

45 (3) The Carbon Sequestration Task Force, a task force as
46 defined in s. 20.03, is created adjunct to the department to
47 provide recommendations for the development of a statewide
48 carbon sequestration program. The task force shall operate in a
49 manner consistent with the requirements of s. 20.052.

50 (4) (a) The task force shall be composed of the following
51 members:

52 1. The Secretary of Environmental Protection, or his or her
53 designee.

54 2. The Commissioner of Agriculture, or his or her designee.

55 3. The executive director of the Fish and Wildlife
56 Conservation Commission, or his or her designee.

57 4. The Chief Resilience Officer, or his or her designee.

58 5. The State Geologist.

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59 6. A representative from the National Estuary Program,
60 appointed by the Secretary of Environmental Protection.

61 7. A member of an environmental not-for-profit
62 organization, appointed by the Secretary of Environmental
63 Protection.

64 8. A landowner of working agricultural lands, appointed by
65 the Commissioner of Agriculture.

66 9. A representative from a state university with expertise
67 in energy or sustainability, appointed by the Secretary of
68 Environmental Protection.

69 10. A representative from the University of Florida
70 Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, appointed by the
71 Commissioner of Agriculture.

72 11. A representative from the Florida Sea Grant Program,
73 appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture.

74 (b) Appointments to the task force must be made by August
75 1, 2025.

76 (c) Each appointed member serves at the pleasure of the
77 appointing official.

78 (d) A vacancy on the task force must be filled in the same
79 manner as the original appointment.

80 (e) The task force shall elect a chair from among the
81 members.

82 (f) The task force shall convene no later than September 1,
83 2025. The task force shall meet quarterly or upon the call of
84 the chair. The task force shall hold its meetings in person or
85 through teleconference or other electronic means.

86 (5) The duties of the task force shall include all of the
87 following:

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88 (a) Identify and inventory terrestrial and aquatic
89 environments suitable for carbon sequestration in this state.

90 (b) Consider possible methods of increasing carbon
91 sequestration within the natural environment through state land
92 and marine resource use policies; agricultural, aquacultural,
93 and silvicultural practices; and other practices to achieve
94 restoration of natural resources and long-term conservation.

95 (c) Develop a standardized methodology, including
96 appropriate technology and existing research, to establish
97 baseline carbon levels and account for increases in carbon
98 sequestration over time.

99 (d) Evaluate additional ecosystem services and benefits of
100 terrestrial and aquatic environments that may promote
101 conservation and ecosystem restoration success, including water
102 recharge, stormwater filtration, threatened or endangered
103 wildlife habitat, nutrient reduction, flood mitigation and
104 protection, coastal resilience, air quality, soil health, and
105 food security.

106 (e) Recommend short-term and long-term benchmarks for
107 increasing carbon sequestration in terrestrial and aquatic
108 ecosystems.

109 (f) Identify existing carbon markets and other
110 considerations relevant to participation by the state in such
111 markets.

112 (g) Identify potential funding mechanisms to encourage
113 carbon sequestration practices and activities in this state.

114 (6) By October 1, 2026, the task force shall submit to the
115 Secretary of Environmental Protection a report summarizing the
116 task force activities and findings in its first year, including

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117 a nonrecurring budget request for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

118 (7) By October 1, 2027, the task force shall submit to the
119 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
120 House of Representatives a report that compiles the findings and
121 recommendations of the task force. The task force shall
122 terminate on April 30, 2028.

123 Section 2. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of
124 \$350,000 in nonrecurring funds from the Administrative Trust
125 Fund within the Department of Environmental Protection is
126 appropriated to the Department of Environmental Protection for
127 the purpose of providing administrative and support services to
128 the Carbon Sequestration Task Force pursuant to s. 403.945,
129 Florida Statutes.

130 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.