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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to nature-based methods for improving
3 coastal resilience; amending s. 380.0933, F.S.;
4 specifying that the Florida Flood Hub for Applied
5 Research and Innovation is established within the
6 University of South Florida, rather than within the
7 University of South Florida College of Marine Science;
8 requiring the hub to develop design guidelines and
9 standards for optimal combinations of green and gray
10 infrastructure and to model the effects of conceptual
11 designs of certain green and gray infrastructure;
12 providing for the appointment of an executive director
13 to lead the hub; creating s. 380.0938, F.S.; requiring
14 the Department of Environmental Protection to adopt
15 rules for nature-based methods for coastal resilience;
16 providing requirements for such rules; requiring the
17 department, in consultation with the Division of
18 Insurance Agent and Agency Services of the Department
19 of Financial Services, to conduct a statewide
20 feasibility study regarding the value of nature-based
21 methods being used for a specified purpose; requiring
22 the department to submit a report to the Governor and
23 the Legislature by a specified date; providing an
24 appropriation; providing an effective date.

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26 WHEREAS, the coastline is a critical state resource that
27 benefits the public interest by providing economic benefits,
28 such as flood control, fishing, recreation, and navigation, and
29 natural habitat and biodiversity functions, such as improved

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30 water quality and habitat for endangered and threatened species
31 and other flora and fauna, and

32 WHEREAS, rising sea levels and an increasing frequency of
33 adverse weather events pose a significant risk to people and
34 property along the coastline and threaten the public benefits
35 and functions offered by the coastline, and

36 WHEREAS, as identified in the Miami-Dade Back Bay Coastal
37 Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study, natural infrastructure,
38 including mangrove stands, living seawalls, and other nature-
39 based designs, can play an essential role in improving coastal
40 resilience and mitigating harm to this state's coastlines, and

41 WHEREAS, the Legislature intends to promote state and local
42 efforts to restore mangrove forests along the coastline and
43 further study the impact of other nature-based methods on this
44 state's coastal resilience and economic development, NOW,
45 THEREFORE,

46

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

48

49 Section 1. Present paragraphs (c) through (i) of subsection
50 (2) of section 380.0933, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as
51 paragraphs (e) through (k), respectively, new paragraphs (c) and
52 (d) are added to that subsection, and subsections (1) and (4) of
53 that section are amended, to read:

54 380.0933 Florida Flood Hub for Applied Research and
55 Innovation.—

56 (1) The Florida Flood Hub for Applied Research and
57 Innovation is established within the University of South Florida
58 ~~College of Marine Science~~ to coordinate efforts between the

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59 academic and research institutions of the state. The University
60 of South Florida ~~College of Marine Science or its successor~~
61 ~~entity~~ will serve as the lead institution and engage other
62 academic and research institutions, private partners, and
63 financial sponsors to coordinate efforts to support applied
64 research and innovation to address the flooding and sea level
65 rise challenges of the state.

66 (2) The hub shall, at a minimum:

67 (c) Develop design guidelines and standards for optimal
68 combinations of green and gray infrastructure to address sea
69 level rise and the impact of storm surges.

70 (d) Model the effects, including flood risk reduction and
71 socioeconomic benefits, of conceptual designs of green
72 infrastructure and hybrid green-gray infrastructure, and the
73 integration of green natural systems into gray infrastructure
74 systems, on this state's coastal resilience.

75 (4) The hub shall be led by ~~employ~~ an executive director
76 who is appointed by and reports to the President of the
77 University of South Florida, or the president's designee.

78 Section 2. Section 380.0938, Florida Statutes, is created
79 to read:

80 380.0938 Nature-based methods for improving coastal
81 resilience.-

82 (1) The Department of Environmental Protection shall adopt
83 rules governing nature-based methods for improving coastal
84 resilience. The rules must do all of the following:

85 (a) Address significant erosion in areas of critical state
86 concern.

87 (b) Identify ways that new developments can avoid or

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88 mitigate their impacts on mangrove stands.

89 (c) Encourage local governmental entities to develop or
90 participate in:

91 1. Mangrove replanting and hydrological restoration
92 programs; and

93 2. Restoration of oyster reefs, salt marshes, and coral
94 reefs.

95 (d) Identify and monitor threats to mangroves.

96 (e) Protect barrier and spoil islands.

97 (f) Assist efforts to improve coastal resilience through
98 the use of green infrastructure, beach renourishment, dune
99 restoration, living seawalls, shoreline and vegetation planting,
100 stormwater planters, permeable pavements, and ecologically sound
101 building materials.

102 (g) Promote public awareness of the value of green
103 infrastructure and statewide education campaigns conducted by
104 local governmental entities.

105 (h) Identify vulnerable public and private properties along
106 the coastline and encourage partnerships with local governmental
107 entities to create local protection and restoration zone
108 programs for implementing the rules developed by the department
109 pursuant to this section.

110 (i) Protect and maintain access to and navigation of the
111 marked channel and the right-of-way of the Florida Intracoastal
112 Waterway as defined in s. 327.02.

113 (j) Create permitting incentives and approvals of, and
114 encourage the use of, new strategies and technologies, such as
115 3D printing, for living shorelines and nature-based features for
116 coastal protection.

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117 (k) Assist in the development of workforce training in this
118 state which includes flood and sea level rise research,
119 prediction, and adaptation and mitigation strategies. The
120 department shall provide incentives to local communities that
121 apply for funding through the Workforce Development
122 Capitalization Incentive Grant Program pursuant to s. 1011.801
123 to implement such workforce training.

124 (l) Encourage partnerships with local governmental entities
125 to create projects using green infrastructure for coastal
126 protection through the Resilient Florida Grant Program pursuant
127 to s. 380.093(3)(b)1.d.

128 (m) Develop guidelines for determining when a green
129 infrastructure project is clearly in the public interest under
130 s. 373.414(1)(a).

131 (n) Streamline the permitting process under s. 373.4131 for
132 green infrastructure projects.

133 (o) Streamline permitting after designated storm events or
134 disasters to replace failed coastal infrastructure with green or
135 hybrid green-gray infrastructure that follows established green
136 and green-gray design guidelines.

137 (2) The department, in consultation with the Division of
138 Insurance Agent and Agency Services, shall conduct a statewide
139 feasibility study to determine the value of nature-based methods
140 for coastal flood risk reduction within coastal communities to
141 reduce insurance premiums and improve local governments'
142 community ratings in the National Flood Insurance Program
143 Community Rating System. The department shall submit a report on
144 the findings of the study to the Governor, the President of the
145 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July

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146 1, 2026.

147 Section 3. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of
148 \$250,000 in nonrecurring funds from the Resilient Florida Trust
149 Fund is appropriated to the Department of Environmental
150 Protection to conduct the feasibility study for coastal flood
151 risk reduction required by this act.

152 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.