

By Senator Berman

26-00693A-25

2025762__

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to preventing the spread of avian
3 influenza; creating the Be Ready Task Force within the
4 Department of Health for a specified purpose;
5 providing for membership and meetings of the task
6 force; requiring the task force to develop specified
7 recommendations; requiring the task force to submit a
8 report of its recommendations to the Governor and the
9 Legislature by a specified date; providing for
10 dissolution of the task force; providing an effective
11 date.

12
13 WHEREAS, avian influenza cases are rising in the animal
14 population in the United States, and

15 WHEREAS, there have been at least 61 reported cases of
16 animal-to-human transmission since April 2024, and

17 WHEREAS, a recent fatal case in Louisiana showed a genetic
18 mutation that could possibly lead to human-to-human
19 transmission, and

20 WHEREAS, it is imperative that Florida convene a task force
21 to prepare a comprehensive statewide response strategy to
22 prevent the spread of avian influenza in this state, NOW,
23 THEREFORE,

24
25 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

26
27 Section 1. There is hereby created a Be Ready Task Force, a
28 task force as defined in s. 20.03(5), Florida Statutes, within
29 the Department of Health for the purpose of developing a

26-00693A-25

2025762__

30 comprehensive statewide response strategy to prevent the spread
31 of avian influenza in the livestock population of this state and
32 preparing for the probability of human-to-human transmission of
33 avian influenza in this state. The department shall provide
34 administrative support to the task force.

35 (1) (a) The task force shall be composed of the following
36 members:

37 1. Two physicians specializing in infectious diseases who
38 are on staff with a medical school in this state and have a
39 background in public health, appointed by the Governor.

40 2. The State Surgeon General and the Deputy Secretary of
41 Health or their designees. The State Surgeon General or his or
42 her designee shall serve as the chair of the task force.

43 3. Two representatives of the Division of Emergency
44 Management, appointed by the director.

45 4. Three representatives from county health departments,
46 with at least one representative from a rural county, appointed
47 by the Governor.

48 5. One representative of a water management district,
49 appointed by the Governor.

50 6. Two representatives of the Department of Agriculture and
51 Consumer Services who have experience working with the livestock
52 industry, appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture.

53 (b) The task force shall meet upon the call of the chair
54 and as often as necessary to complete its duties under this
55 section. The task force may conduct its meetings through
56 teleconference or other electronic means.

57 (c) Members of the task force shall serve without
58 compensation, but may be reimbursed for per diem and travel

26-00693A-25

2025762__

59 expenses as provided in s. 112.061, Florida Statutes.

60 (2) The task force shall develop recommendations on all of
61 the following:

62 (a) Monitoring and reporting livestock with avian
63 influenza, including the location for each outbreak.

64 (b) Wastewater monitoring for avian influenza transmission.

65 (c) How to cost-effectively implement statewide testing for
66 avian influenza.

67 (d) Ways in which the state can implement a statewide
68 response to prevent the spread of avian influenza among
69 livestock as well as humans.

70 (3) The task force shall submit a report of its
71 recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
72 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by October 1,
73 2025. The task force is dissolved upon submission of its report.

74 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.