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.)

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

BILL:	CS/CS/SB 302
INTRODUCER:	Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government and Environment and Natural Resources Committee and Senator Garcia
SUBJECT:	Nature-based Solutions for Improving Coastal Resilience
DATE:	February 6, 2026 REVISED:

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Barriero	Rogers	EN	**Fav/CS**
2.	Reagan	Betta	AEG	**Fav/CS**
3.			FP	

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/CS/SB 302 creates several provisions related to using nature-based methods to improve coastal resiliency. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to initiate rulemaking to establish a statewide permitting process for such nature-based methods.
- Requires the DEP to develop design guidelines and standards for using green or hybrid green-gray infrastructure to address coastal resiliency.
- Requires the DEP and local governments to promote public awareness and education of the value of nature-based solutions for coastal resiliency.
- Authorizes structures to be erected for nature-based solutions to improve coastal resiliency in all state preserves.
- Authorizes dredging and filling of submerged lands and placement of living shorelines and seawalls in Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve for coastal resiliency purposes.

The rulemaking requirements may have a negative fiscal impact on the DEP. These costs can be absorbed within existing resources. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Aquatic Preserves

The Florida Aquatic Preserve Act of 1975 preserves the state-owned submerged lands in areas with exceptional biological, aesthetic, and scientific value for the benefit of future generations.[1] Aquatic preserves provide many benefits, including protecting vital coastal and freshwater ecosystems.[2] The Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection manages the Aquatic Preserve Program and oversees Florida's 43 aquatic preserves.[3] Florida's 43 aquatic preserves encompass 2.9 million acres of submerged lands.[4] For the purposes of maintaining aquatic preserves, current law establishes a number of provisions to which the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Board) is subject. The Board may not approve any further sale, lease, or transfer of sovereignty submerged lands unless the action is in public interest.[5] The Board may also not approve the waterward relocation or setting of bulkhead lines waterward of the line of mean high water within the preserve except when public road and bridge construction projects have no reasonable alternative and it is shown to not be contrary to the public interest.[6]

Additionally, current law limits when the Board may approve any further dredging or filling of submerged lands in aquatic preserves, only allowing this to occur in specified circumstances, such as:

- Dredging and spoiling as may be authorized for public navigation projects.
- Dredging and spoiling as may be authorized for the creation and maintenance of marinas, piers, and docks and their attendant navigation channels.
- Other alteration of physical conditions as may, in the opinion of the trustees, be necessary to enhance the quality or utility of the preserve or the public health generally.
- Other maintenance dredging as may be required for existing navigation channels. Reasonable improvements as may be necessary for public utility installation or expansion.
- Installation and maintenance of oil and gas transportation facilities, provided such facilities are properly marked with marine aids to navigation as prescribed by federal law.[7]

Current law also prohibits structures being erected within a preserve, except in certain circumstances. Such circumstances include:

- Private residential docks for reasonable ingress or egress of riparian owners.

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[1] See s. 258.35, F.S. and s. 258.36, F.S. Section 258.37(1), F.S., defines the term "aquatic preserve" as an exceptional area of submerged lands and its associated waters set aside to be maintained in its natural condition.
[2] Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Aquatic Preserves (last visited Feb. 5, 2026).
[3] Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection (last visited Feb. 5, 2026).
[4] Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Aquatic Preserves (last visited Feb. 5, 2026). Four aquatic preserves are inland near springs and rivers. See Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection: Resilience and Coastal Protection Programs (last visited Feb. 5, 2026).
[5] Section 258.42(1)(a), F.S. "Public interest" means demonstrable environmental, social, and economic benefits which would accrue to the public at large as a result of a proposed action, and which would clearly exceed all demonstrable environmental, social, and economic costs of the proposed action. In determining the public interest in a request for use, sale, lease, or transfer of interest in sovereignty lands or severance of materials from sovereignty lands, the Board shall consider the ultimate project and purpose to be served by said use, sale, lease, or transfer of lands or materials. Rule 18-20.003(46), F.A.C
[6] Section 258.42(2), F.S.
[7] Section 258.42(3)(a), F.S.

- Private residential multislip docks located within a reasonable distance of a publicly maintained navigation channel, or a natural channel of adequate depth and width to allow operation of the watercraft for which the docking facility is designed without the craft having an adverse impact on marine resources.
- Commercial docking facilities shown to be consistent with the use or management criteria of the preserve, if the facilities are located within a reasonable distance of a publicly maintained navigation channel, or a natural channel of adequate depth and width to allow operation of the watercraft for which the docking facility is designed without the craft having an adverse impact on marine resources.
- Structures for shore protection, including restoration of seawalls at their previous location or upland of or within 18 inches waterward of their previous location, approved navigational aids, or public utility crossings.[8]

Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve

Current law designates Biscayne Bay, located in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties, as an aquatic preserve.[9] Established in 1974, the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve encompasses 64,607 acres of submerged lands extending the length of Biscayne Bay from the headwaters of the Oleta River south to Card Sound near Key Largo.[10] The preserve excludes the waters of Biscayne Bay National Park.[11] The preserve allows for a number of recreational activities, such as boating, fishing, and swimming, and hosts approximately 16 million visitors annually.[12]

Coastal Resilience, Green Infrastructure, and Nature-Based Solutions

Resilience is the ability of a community to prepare for anticipated natural hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions.[13] Resilience planning includes preparing for hazard events, risk mitigation, and post-event recovery and should be proactive, continuous, and integrated into other community goals and plans.[14]

Green infrastructure and nature-based solutions are increasingly being integrated into resilience planning. Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage and treat stormwater runoff water, often in urban environments.[15] The scale of green infrastructure ranges from urban installations, such as rain gardens and green roofs, to large tracts of undeveloped natural lands.[16] The interconnected network of green infrastructure can enhance the resiliency of

[8] Section 258.42(3)(e), F.S.
[9] Section 258.397(1), F.S.
[10] Department of Environmental Protection, Aquatic Preserves: Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve, https://floridaaquaticpreserves.org/BBAP (last visited Feb. 5, 2026).
[11] *Id.*
[12] *Id.*
[13] Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *National Risk Index: Community Resilience*, https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/community-resilience (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[14] National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Dep't of Commerce, *Community Resilience Planning Guide for Buildings and Infrastructure Systems*, 1 (2016), *available at* https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.1190v1.pdf.
[15] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *Improving Community Resiliency with Green Infrastructure*, 1 (2014), *available at* https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-06/documents/gi_resiliency.pdf.
[16] *Id.*

infrastructure and communities by increasing water supplies, reducing flooding, providing climate adaptability, and improving water quality.[17]

Similarly, nature-based solutions integrate natural features and processes into the built environment to promote resilient communities.[18] Coastal nature-based solutions can stabilize shorelines, reduce erosion, and buffer coastal areas from the impacts of storms, sea level rise, and flooding.[19] Examples of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions include:

- Land conservation;
- Tree canopy preservation;
- Floodplain and wetland restoration;
- Bioretention (e.g., planter boxes, bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs);
- Permeable pavement; and
- Living shorelines and oyster reefs.[20]

Stormwater Planter, Permeable Pavement, Living Shoreline, and Bioretention[21]

[17] *Id.*
[18] FEMA, *Building Community Resilience with Nature-based Solutions*, 4 (2020), *available at* https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_bric_nature-based-solutions-guide_2020.pdf.
[19] FEMA, *Building Community Resilience with Nature-based Solutions* at 5. *See generally* EPA, *Green Infrastructure and Extreme Weather*, https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/climate-resiliency-and-green-infrastructure (last visited Nov. 20, 2025); EPA, *Green Infrastructure Opportunities that Arise During Municipal Operations*, 1 (2015), *available at* https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-09/documents/green_infrastructure_roadshow.pdf.
[20] FEMA, *Building Community Resilience with Nature-based Solutions* at 6-8; EPA, *Types of Green Infrastructure*, https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/types-green-infrastructure (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[21] EPA, *Types of Green Infrastructure*, https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/types-green-infrastructure (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).

Living Shorelines and Seawalls

A living shoreline is a nature-based solution that consists of strategically placing natural materials such as plants and stones along a coastal edge.[22] Living shorelines promote and rely on the growth of natural vegetation over time to help reduce erosion, increase resiliency, and filter runoff.[23] This natural infrastructure helps maintain the shoreline ecosystem while being an innovative coastal management technique.[24] Research indicates that living shorelines are more resilient than bulkheads in protecting against the effects of hurricanes.[25]

A living seawall is designed to encourage underwater habitats and usually consists of naturalistic concrete, rock, and/or shell structures designed to attract fish, oysters, and other living things, absorb wave energy without causing erosion, and improve aesthetics.[26]

Mangroves

Florida's estimated 600,000 acres of mangrove forests contribute to the overall health of the state's southern coastal zone and beyond.[27] Mangroves stabilize coastlines, slow the movement of tides, store carbon, and help protect against erosion and damage from storm surges.[28] According to one study by the Nature Conservancy, mangroves prevented $1.5 billion in direct flood damages and protected over half a million people in Florida during Hurricane Irma in 2017, reducing damages by nearly 25 percent in counties with mangroves.[29] In Collier County, some regions immediately behind the county's mangroves receive annual risk reduction benefits

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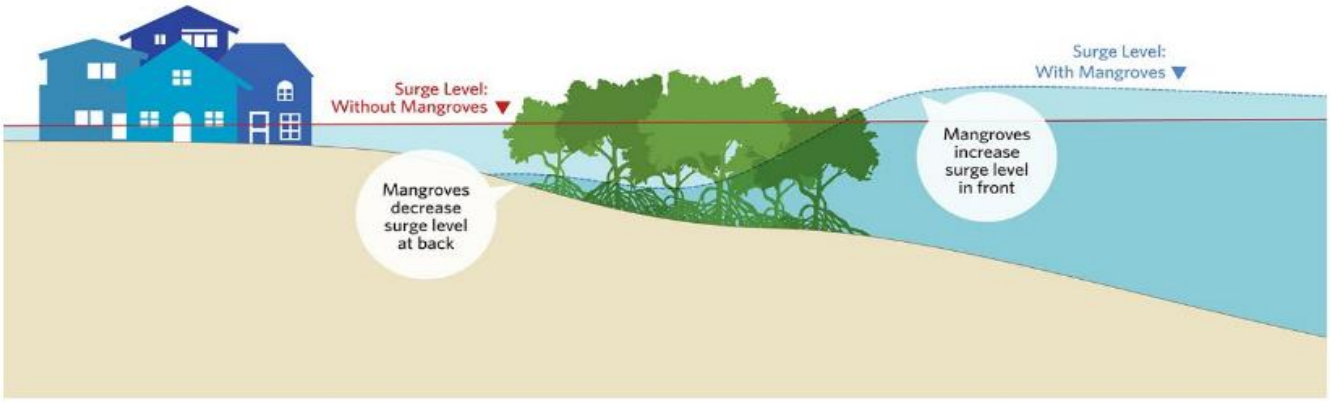
[22] *Id.*
[23] *Id.*
[24] *Id.*
[25] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), *What is a living shoreline?*, https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/living-shoreline.html (last visited Nov. 20, 2025). *See also* NOAA, *Understanding Living Shorelines*, https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-living-shorelines#what-is-a-living-shoreline (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[26] Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium, *Mote scientists to study Sarasota's new 'living seawall,'* https://mote.org/news/mote-scientists-to-study-sarasotas-new-living-seawall/ (last visited Nov. 20, 2025). *See also* Port of San Francisco, *Living Seawall Pilot*, https://www.sfport.com/wrp/living-seawall (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[27] DEP, *Florida's Mangroves*, https://floridadep.gov/rcp/rcp/content/floridas-mangroves (last visited Nov. 20, 2025). Mangroves are gaining ground along their northern Florida habitat limits, and as winter cold snaps decrease, mangroves are expected to expand further north into new territory. Kristen Minogue & Heather Dewar, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, *With Fewer Hard Frosts, Tropical Mangroves Push North*, 1 (2013), *available at* https://sercblog.si.edu/with-fewer-hard-frosts-tropical-mangroves-push-north/.
[28] NASA, *Mangroves Are Losing Their Resilience*, https://landsat.gsfc.nasa.gov/article/mangroves-are-losing-their-resilience/ (last visited Nov. 20, 2025). *See also*, DEP, *Florida's Mangroves*, https://floridadep.gov/rcp/rcp/content/floridas-mangroves; NASA, *NASA Study Maps the Roots of Global Mangrove Loss*, *available at* https://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2020/nasa-study-maps-the-roots-of-global-mangrove-loss. Mangroves reduce wave heights by 31 percent on average. Siddharth Narayan et al., *The Effectiveness, Costs and Coastal Protection Benefits of Natural and Nature-Based Defenses*, Plos One, 4 (2016), *available at* https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0154735.
[29] Siddharth Narayan et al., The Nature Conservancy, *Valuing the Flood Risk Reduction Benefits of Florida's Mangroves*, 2, *available at* https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/Mangrove_Report_digital_FINAL.pdf.

of over $1 million.[30] Another study found that without the mangroves on Florida's coast, the storm surge of Hurricane Wilma would have extended up to 70 percent further inland.[31]



MANGROVE BENEFITS Surge is reduced behind mangroves, helping ease flooding to land and properties. © The Nature Conservancy

The amount of protection afforded by mangroves depends on the width of the forest. A narrow fringe of mangroves offers limited protection, while a wide fringe can considerably reduce wave and flood damage to landward areas by enabling overflowing water to be absorbed into the expanse of forest.[32] Notably, the Legislature has found that many areas of mangroves in Florida occur as narrow riparian fringes that do not provide all the functions of mangrove forests or provide such functions to a lesser degree.[33]

Mangroves also play an important ecological role as a habitat for various species of marine and estuarine vertebrates, invertebrates, and other wildlife,[34] including endangered and threatened species such as the manatee, hawksbill sea turtle, American crocodile, Key deer, and Florida panther.[35] Mangrove branches act as bird rookeries and nesting areas for coastal wading birds, and their intricate root systems provide critical nursery habitats for fish, crustaceans, shellfish, and other marine life.[36] The roots also make ideal underwater perches for barnacles, oysters, crabs, and other marine organisms.[37] These organisms provide food for juvenile fish, birds, reptiles, and other wildlife.[38] Florida's important recreational and commercial fisheries would drastically decline without healthy mangrove forests.[39]

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[30] *Id.* at 10. Worldwide, mangroves reduce risk to more than 15 million people and prevent more than $65 billion in property damages each year. Tiffany Duong, World Economic Forum, *Why planting mangroves can help save the planet* (2021), *available at* https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/08/planting-mangroves-helps-the-planet/.
[31] Keqi Zhang et al., *The role of mangroves in attenuating storm surges*, Estuarine, Coastal and Shelf Science, vols. 102-103, 11, 23 (2012), *available at* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272771412000674.
[32] *Id.*
[33] Section 403.9322(3), F.S.
[34] Section 403.9322(2), F.S.
[35] Florida Museum, University of Florida, *South Florida Aquatic Environments: Mangrove Life*, https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/southflorida/habitats/mangroves/mangrove-life/ (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[36] *Id.*; DEP, *Florida's Mangroves*; Tiffany Duong, World Economic Forum, *Why planting mangroves can help save the planet* (2021), *available at* https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/08/planting-mangroves-helps-the-planet/.
[37] Hannah Waters, Smithsonian Institution, *Mangrove Restoration: Letting Mother Nature Do the Work* (2016), *available at* https://ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/plants-algae/mangrove-restoration-letting-mother-nature-do-work.
[38] *Id.*
[39] DEP, *Florida's Mangroves*, https://floridadep.gov/rcp/rcp/content/floridas-mangroves.

Human activities such as coastal development are responsible for destroying more mangrove forests worldwide than any other type of coastal habitat.[40] Rising sea levels and more intense droughts and storms could increase the rate of mangrove loss.[41]

National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was created by the passage of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968.[42] The NFIP is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and enables homeowners, business owners, and renters in flood-prone areas to purchase flood insurance protection from the federal government.[43] Participation in the NFIP is voluntary.[44] To join, a community must:

- Complete an application;
- Adopt a resolution of intent to participate and cooperate with the FEMA; and
- Adopt and submit a floodplain management ordinance that meets or exceeds the minimum NFIP criteria.[45]

The NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that rewards communities for implementing floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the NFIP.[46] Property owners within communities that participate in the CRS program receive discounts on flood insurance premiums.[47] Premium discounts range from five to 45 percent based on a community's CRS credit points.[48] Communities earn credit points by implementing FEMA-approved activities or programs, such as:

- Flood damage reduction programs that reduce the flood risk to existing development;
- Public outreach programs advising people about flood hazards, flood insurance, and ways to reduce flood damage;
- Mapping and regulations limiting floodplain development or providing increased protection to new and existing development; or
- Warning and response programs that provide early flood warnings to the public and incorporate substantial damage assessments into flood response operations.[49]

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[40] Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, *Mangrove Forests*, https://myfwc.com/research/habitat/coastal-wetlands/mangroves/ (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[41] Miriam C. Jones et al., *Rapid inundation of southern Florida coastline despite low relative sea-level rise rates during the late-Holocene*, Nature Communications, 1, 10 (2019), *available at* https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-11138-4; Xiucheng Yang et al., *Tracking mangrove condition changes using dense Landsat time series*, Remote Sensing of Environment, vol. 15, 1 (2024), *available at* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0034425724004875?via%3Dihub.
[42] The National Flood Insurance Act, Pub. L. 90-448, 82 Stat. 572 (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.). *See also* FEMA, *Flood Insurance Rules and Regulations*, https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance/rules-legislation (last visited Feb. 7, 2025).
[43] *See* FEMA, *Flood Insurance*, https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[44] FEMA, *Participation in the NFIP*, https://www.fema.gov/about/glossary/participation-nfip (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[45] *Id.*
[46] FEMA, *Community Rating System*, https://www.fema.gov/floodplain-management/community-rating-system (last visited Nov. 20, 2025).
[47] *Id.*
[48] *Id.*
[49] FEMA, *Community Rating System: A Local Official's Guide to Saving Lives, Preventing Property Damage, and Reducing the Cost of Flood Insurance*, 3-6 (2018), *available at* https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_community-rating-system_local-guide-flood-insurance-2018.pdf.

Resilient Florida Grant Program

The Resilient Florida Grant Program provides grants to counties and municipalities to fund community resilience planning, including, among other things, vulnerability assessments that identify or address risks of flooding and sea level rise, comprehensive plan amendments, and feasibility studies and permitting costs for nature-based solutions that reduce the impact of flooding and sea level rise.[50] Water management districts are also eligible to receive grants under the Resilient Florida Grant Program to assist local government adaptation planning.[51]

Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program

The Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program was created to provide grants to school districts and Florida College System institutions to fund costs associated with the creation or expansion of career and technical education programs that lead to industry certifications included on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List.[52] The programs may serve secondary students or postsecondary students if the postsecondary career and technical education program also serves secondary students.[53]

Grant funds may be used for instructional and laboratory equipment, supplies, personnel, student services, or other expenses associated with the creation or expansion of a career and technical education program that serves secondary students.[54] In ranking applications, the State Board of Education must consider the statewide geographic dispersion of grant funds and give priority to applications from education agencies that are making maximum use of their workforce development funding by offering high-performing, high-demand programs.[55]

Environmental Resource Permitting (ERP)

Part IV of ch. 373, F.S., and chapter 62-330 of the Florida Administrative Code regulate the statewide ERP program, which is the primary tool used by the DEP and the water management districts for preserving natural resources and fish and wildlife, minimizing degradation of water resources caused by stormwater discharges, and providing for the management of water and related land resources. The program governs the construction, alteration, operation, maintenance, repair, abandonment, and removal of stormwater management systems, dams, impoundments, reservoirs, appurtenant works, and other works such as docks, piers, structures, dredging, and filling located in, on, or over wetlands or other surface waters.[56]

Projects that are in, on, or over surface waters and wetlands are subject to additional permitting requirements. For example, if a proposed activity significantly degrades or is within an

[50] Section 380.093(3)(b)1., F.S.
[51] Section 380.093(3)(b)2., F.S. Such funding must support the Florida Flood Hub and DEP's efforts related to data creation, collection, modeling, and statewide standards implementation.
[52] Section 1011.801, F.S.
[53] *Id.*
[54] Section 1011.801(1), F.S.
[55] Section 1011.801(2), F.S.
[56] Fla. Admin. Code R. 62-330.010(2).

Outstanding Florida Water,[57] the ERP applicant must provide reasonable assurance that the proposed activity will be clearly in the public interest.[58] In determining whether an activity is clearly in the public interest, the water management district or the DEP must consider and balance the following criteria:

- Whether the activity will adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare or the property of others;
- Whether the activity will adversely affect the conservation of fish and wildlife, including endangered or threatened species, or their habitats;
- Whether the activity will adversely affect navigation or the flow of water or cause harmful erosion or shoaling;
- Whether the activity will adversely affect the fishing or recreational values or marine productivity in the vicinity of the activity;
- Whether the activity will be of a temporary or permanent nature;
- Whether the activity will adversely affect or will enhance significant historical and archaeological resources; and

The current condition and relative value of functions being performed by areas affected by the proposed activity.[59]

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 258.397, F.S., to allow minimum dredging and filling in the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve as may be authorized for the restoration and enhancement of natural systems, including the management of substrate for vegetation planting and restoration for mangroves, salt marshes, seagrasses, and oyster reefs, to enhance the quality and utility of the preserve and coastal resiliency.

Section 2 amends s. 258.42, F.S., to authorize structures to be erected within aquatic preserves if they are erected for nature-based solutions to improve coastal resiliency, including living seawalls, shoreline and vegetation planting, seagrass planting, wave attenuation devices, and green or hybrid green-gray stormwater infrastructure, which are sited to provide the most appropriate benefit.

Section 3 creates s. 380.0938, F.S., regarding nature-based solutions for improving coastal resilience.

The bill requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), by January 1, 2027, to develop design guidelines and standards for optimal combinations of nature-based methods for using green or hybrid green-gray infrastructure to address coastal resiliency, including local mitigation strategies for erosion control, sea level rise, and storm surge.

[57] An Outstanding Florida Water is a water designated worthy of special protection because of its natural attributes. DEP, *Outstanding Florida Waters*, https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-standards/content/outstanding-florida-waters (last visited Nov. 20, 2025); *see* Fla. Admin. Code R. 62-302.700(2) and (9).
[58] Section 373.414(1), F.S.
[59] Section 373.414(1)(a), F.S.

The bill directs the DEP, by January1, 2027, to initiate rulemaking to establish a statewide permitting process for nature-based solutions to improve coastal resilience. The rules must address the following:

- Criteria and thresholds for permits, including monitoring, inspection, and reporting requirements.
- Procedures for permit application review, including notices, duration and modification of permits, permit transfers, and operational requirements.
- Provisions for emergencies, abandonment and removal of systems, and significant erosion in areas of critical state concern.
- Exemptions and general permits that do not allow significant adverse impacts to occur.
- Improvement of coastal resilience using nature-based solutions, including living seawalls, shoreline and vegetation planting, seagrass planting, wave attenuation devices, green or hybrid green-gray stormwater infrastructure, beach renourishment, dune and wetland restoration, reinforced dunes, reef restoration, and ecologically sound building materials.
- Protecting and maintaining access to the Florida Intracoastal Waterway marked channel and right-of-way.
- Incentives for using new strategies and technologies for coastal protection.
- Incentives to encourage local governmental entities to create projects using nature-based solutions for coastal protection through the Resilient Florida Grant Program.
- Guidelines to determine when a nature-based solution project is in the public interest and safety.
- Permitting processes for after designated storm events or disasters to replace failed coastal infrastructure with nature-based or hybrid green-gray infrastructure that follows such guidelines established by the DEP under the bill.
- Specific ways local governments can participate in coastal resiliency, including mangrove replanting and hydrological restoration programs; restoration of oyster reefs, salt marshes, seagrass beds, and coral reefs; identification and monitoring of threats to mangroves; and protection of barrier and spoil islands.

The bill requires the DEP and local governments to promote public awareness and education of the value of nature-based solutions for coastal resiliency, including the preservation and restoration of wetlands, floodplains, seagrasses, mangroves, and other natural systems along the coastline.

Section 3 provides an effective date of July 1, 2026.

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.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) related to the bill's rulemaking requirements and the feasibility study. This cost can be absorbed within existing resources.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 380.0938 of the Florida Statures.

This bill amends sections 258.397 and 258.42 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS/CS by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government on February 4, 2026:

The committee substitute creates several provisions related to using nature-based methods to improve coastal resiliency. Specifically, the CS:

- Requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to initiate rulemaking to establish a statewide permitting process for such nature-based methods.
- Requires the DEP to develop design guidelines and standards for using green or hybrid green-gray infrastructure to address coastal resiliency.
- Requires the DEP and local governments to promote public awareness and education of the value of nature-based solutions for coastal resiliency.
- Authorizes structures to be erected for nature-based solutions to improve coastal resiliency in all state preserves.
- Authorizes dredging and filling of submerged lands and placement of living shorelines and seawalls in Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve for coastal resiliency purposes.

CS by Environment and Natural Resources on December 2, 2025:

Clarified that the term "hybrid infrastructure" means the combination of gray and green infrastructure and is not limited to infrastructure that is more effective than either approach alone.

B. Amendments:

None.

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