

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: [CS/HB 495](#)

TITLE: Golf Course Best Management Practices

Certification

SPONSOR(S): Albert

COMPANION BILL: [CS/SB 544](#) (Truenow)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: [CS/SB 544](#) (Truenow)

Committee References

[Housing, Agriculture & Tourism](#)

15 Y, 0 N, As CS

[Natural Resources & Disasters](#)

[Agriculture & Natural Resources Budget](#)

[Commerce](#)

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill provides legislative findings and intent for the golf course best management practices (BMPs) certification program (program) and transfers the program to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) via a type two transfer.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state government for costs incurred for transferring the program from DEP to FDACS.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill moves the provision regarding the [Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification Program](#) (program) to Chapter 604, F.S., General Agriculture Laws, from Chapter 403, F.S., Environmental Control, and provides legislative findings and intent. The bill provides that, due to the foundational agricultural nature of golf courses and since the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) oversees [best management practices](#) (BMPs) for [sod growing operations](#) and for the [green industry](#), it is appropriate for FDACS to oversee golf course best management practices certification. (Section [1](#))

The bill provides that the program will be transferred to FDACS from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) via a [type two transfer](#). (Section [2](#))

The bill transfers all powers, duties, functions, records, offices, personnel, associated administrative support positions, property, pending issues, existing contracts, administrative authority, administrative rules, and unexpended balances of appropriations, allocations, and other funds relating to the program from DEP to FDACS. (Section [2](#))

The bill provides that any binding contract or interagency agreement existing before July 1, 2026, between DEP, or an entity or agent of DEP, and any other agency, entity, or person relating to the program continues as a binding contract or agreement for the remainder of the term of such contract or agreement on the successor entity responsible for the program, activity, or functions relative to the contract or agreement. (Section [2](#))

The bill provides a short title, the "Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification Act." (Section [1](#))

The bill makes conforming changes. (Section [1](#))

STORAGE NAME: h0495a.HAT

DATE: 1/30/2026

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section [3](#))

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state government for costs incurred for transferring the program from DEP to FDACS.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Best Management Practices

Best management practices (BMPs) are designed to protect water resources from nonpoint source pollution.¹ BMPs are guidelines containing practical measures that can reduce the effects of fertilizer, nutrients, and water use on the environment and otherwise manage the landscape to further protect water resources.² Producers of nonpoint source pollution within areas covered by a basin management action plan (BMAP)³ are required to comply with the established pollutant reductions in the BMAP by either implementing the appropriate BMPs or by conducting water quality monitoring.⁴

Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification Program

Florida law requires the turfgrass science program at the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) to coordinate with DEP to administer the golf course BMP certification program.⁵ The turfgrass science program must provide training and testing programs on golf course BMPs and issue certificates to program participants upon satisfactory completion of the training. It must also review and approve other training and testing programs.⁶

A golf course BMP certification expires after four years.⁷ A recertification may be issued if, within 30 days of the expiration, an applicant submits proof of having completed eight classroom hours of continuing education, including two hours focusing on fertilizer BMPs.⁸

A person with a golf course BMP certification is exempt from additional local training requirements and local ordinances relating to water and fertilizer use blackout periods or restrictions, unless a state of emergency is

¹ UF/IFAS, *Best Management Practices*, <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/agriculture/agriculture-best-management-practices/> (last visited Jan. 19, 2026). Point sources are "any discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance, including any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container, rolling stock, concentrated animal feeding operation, landfill leachate collection system, vessel or other floating craft from which pollutants are or may be discharged. This term does not include return flows from irrigated agriculture or agricultural stormwater runoff." Nonpoint sources are not point sources. Rule 62-620.200(37), F.A.C.

² *Id.*

³ Basin management action plans are one of the primary mechanisms that DEP and FDACS use to address the entire pollution load for a watershed, including point and nonpoint discharges. [S. 403.067\(7\), F.S.](#) A watershed is the land area that contributes to the flow of water into a receiving body of water. [S. 403.031\(24\), F.S.](#)

⁴ [S. 403.067\(7\)\(b\)2.g., F.S.](#) For example, BMPs for agriculture include activities such as managing irrigation water to minimize losses, limiting the use of fertilizers, and waste management.

⁵ [S. 403.9339\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁶ [S. 403.9339\(2\), F.S.](#)

⁷ [S. 403.9339\(4\), F.S.](#)

⁸ [S. 403.9339\(4\), \(5\), F.S.](#)

declared. The certified person must continue to coordinate with the local government to ensure that he or she adheres to the comprehensive BMPs for that specific community.⁹

A certified person is not exempt from complying with the rules and requirements for BMAPs if the golf course is located in an area within a BMAP.¹⁰

Additionally, the turfgrass science program may provide the status of certification holders to local and state governmental entities and is encouraged to create a registry of certification holders.¹¹

Golf Course Best Management Practices

The golf course industry in Florida is the largest of any state. Florida is home to more than 1,100 golf courses and more than 48 million rounds of golf are played on those courses each year.¹² It is important to consider how golf course development and management practices can affect surrounding natural ecosystems.¹³ For example, there are significant environmental concerns with golf course development and management practices that affect soil and water quality, primarily related to nutrients, pesticides, erosion, sediment, and waste handling and disposal.¹⁴ The implementation of BMPs can help mitigate these concerns and give golf courses an environmental advantage over other types of urban development.¹⁵

The golf course BMPs guide, which was published in association with the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, UF/IFAS, and DEP,¹⁶ covers the following topics related to golf course management:

- Environmental monitoring, especially water quality monitoring;
- Environmental concerns during the planning, design, and construction phases;
- Irrigation;
- Nutrient management;
- Turf grass management practices;
- Lake and aquatic plant management;
- Integrated pest management;
- Pesticide management;
- Pollinator protection;
- Maintenance operations; and
- Energy conservation.¹⁷

BMPs in the guide include, but are not limited to, the following:

- For design and construction, the golf course should be designed to minimize the need to alter existing native landscapes and should be located to conserve critical wildlife habitat.¹⁸
- For drainage, internal golf course drains should not drain directly into an open waterbody, but should discharge into pretreatment zones or vegetative buffers to remove nutrients and sediment.¹⁹

⁹ [S. 403.9339\(6\), F.S.](#)

¹⁰ [S. 403.9939\(7\), F.S.](#)

¹¹ [S. 403.9339\(8\), F.S.](#)

¹² UF/IFAS, the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, and DEP, *BMPs for the Enhancement of Env. Quality on FL Golf Courses*, 14 (Sept. 2021), <http://flgolbfp.com/view-the-bmp-guide> (last visited Jan. 19, 2026); Florida Sports Foundation, *Golf*, <https://playinflorida.com/golf/> (last visited Jan. 23, 2026).

¹³ *Id.* at 20.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 21.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 15-16.

¹⁶ *Golf Course BMPs*, *supra* note 12.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.* at 35.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 38.

- For reclaimed water, signs should be posted in accordance with local utility and state requirements and information about the quality of the reclaimed water should be obtained when negotiating a contract with a utility for reclaimed water and at least annually.²⁰
- For irrigation system design, the design operating pressure must account for peak use times and supply line pressures at final buildout for the entire system and rain sensors should shut the irrigation system off after a certain amount of rain is received.²¹
- For nutrient management, nutrients should be applied when turfgrass is actively growing and slow-release nitrogen fertilizers should be applied at the appropriate time of year, taking into consideration the release rate of the chosen material.²²

Sod Growing Operations Best Management Practices

Florida's sod growers provide turfgrasses for golf courses, residential and commercial lawns, recreational areas, and other uses. In addition to releasing oxygen to the atmosphere, sod farm fields and turfgrass areas can help filter pollutants from surface water runoff, reduce soil erosion, and provide aesthetic value in a variety of landscape applications.²³

Sod growing BMPs, as regulated by FDACS, apply to operations engaged in the production of sod, but do not apply to golf courses, cattle operations, home lawns, athletic fields, or other recreational facilities where turfgrasses are installed.²⁴

Green Industries Best Management Practices

UF/IFAS and DEP currently offer the Green Industries BMP program, which teaches environmentally safe landscaping practices that protect water quality and natural resources.²⁵ The program was created for people working in lawn-care and landscape maintenance. Golf course employees are among those who benefit from green industries BMPs training.²⁶

Type Two Transfers

The transfer of an existing agency or department or a program, activity, or function thereof into another agency or department is referred to as a type two transfer.²⁷

Any agency or department, or any program, activity, or function thereof that is transferred by a type two transfer will retain its statutory powers, duties, and functions and its records, personnel, property, and unexpended balances of appropriations, allocations, or other funds once transferred.²⁸ The transfer of segregated funds must be made in such a way that the relation between the program and the revenue source is retained.²⁹

Unless otherwise provided by law, the head of any agency or department to which any agency or department or a program, activity, or function thereof is transferred may establish units or subunits to which the agency or department is assigned and may assign administrative authority for identifiable programs, activities, or functions,

²⁰ *Id.* at 72.

²¹ *Id.* at 78.

²² *Id.* at 153.

²³ FDACS, Ref-17128 Florida Sod Operations 2024 Edition Water Quality and Water Quantity Best Management Practices, FDACS-P-01330, Rev. 10/24, p. 2, incorporated into Rule 5M-9.002, F.A.C.,

https://ccmedia.fdacs.gov/content/download/25407/file/Bmp_FloridaSod2008.pdf.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ UF/IFAS, *Green Industries BMPs*, <https://gibmp.ifas.ufl.edu/> (last visited Jan. 19, 2026); UF/IFAS, *FL Friendly Landscaping Program*, <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/ffl-and-you/gi-bmp-program/> (last visited Jan. 19, 2026).

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ S. 20.06(2), F.S.

²⁸ S. 20.06(2)(a), F.S. Those statutory powers, duties, functions, records, personnel, property, and unexpended balances of appropriation, allocations, or other funds that are transferred elsewhere or abolished will not be retained in a type two transfer.

²⁹ *Id.*

to the extent authorized in statute.³⁰ Further, unless otherwise provided by law, the administrative rules of any agency or department involved in the transfer that are in effect immediately before the transfer remain in effect until specifically changed in the manner provided in law.³¹

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N, As CS	1/29/2026	Curtin	Wright
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	The amendment clarifies that golf course best management practices program participants must follow current program BMP requirements.			
Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee				
Agriculture & Natural Resources Budget Subcommittee				
Commerce Committee				

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.

³⁰ [S. 20.06\(2\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

³¹ [S. 20.06\(2\)\(c\), F.S.](#)