

By the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources; and Senator Truenow

592-01911-26

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to golf courses; transferring, renumbering, and amending s. 403.9339, F.S.; providing a short title; providing legislative findings and intent regarding golf course best management practices certification; defining the term "department"; providing for a type two transfer of the Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification program in the Department of Environmental Protection to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 403.9339, Florida Statutes, is transferred, renumbered as section 604.75, Florida Statutes, and amended to read:

604.75 403.9339 Golf course best management practices certification.—

(1) This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification Act."

(2) The Legislature finds that, due to the foundational agricultural nature of golf courses and since the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services oversees best management practices programs for sod growing operations and for the green industry, it is appropriate for the department to oversee golf course best management practices certification. Certified participants must abide by the best management practices governing the application of fertilizer on sod.

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30 (3) As used in this section, the term "department" means
31 the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

32 (4)(1) To provide a means of documenting and ensuring
33 compliance with best management practices for fertilizer
34 application to golf courses, the turfgrass science program at
35 the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural
36 Sciences, in coordination with the department, shall administer
37 a certification for golf course best management practices.

38 (5)(2) The turfgrass science program, in cooperation with
39 the department, shall:

40 (a) Provide training and testing programs in golf course
41 best management practices and may issue certificates
42 demonstrating satisfactory completion of the training.

43 (b) Approve training and testing programs in golf course
44 best management practices that are equivalent to or more
45 comprehensive than the programs provided by the turfgrass
46 science program under this subsection paragraph (a). Such
47 programs must be reviewed and reapproved by the turfgrass
48 science program if significant changes are made.

49 (6)(3) To obtain a golf course best management practices
50 certification, an applicant must submit to the turfgrass science
51 program a copy of the training certificate issued under
52 subsection (5)(2).

53 (7)(4) A golf course best management practices
54 certification issued under this section expires 4 years after
55 the date of issuance. Upon expiration of the certification, or
56 after a grace period of not more than 30 days after the
57 expiration date, a recertification may be issued.

58 (8)(5) To obtain a golf course best management practices

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59 recertification, an applicant must submit to the turfgrass
60 science program proof of having completed 8 classroom hours of
61 continuing education, of which at least 2 hours must address
62 fertilizer best management practices.

63 (9)(6) A person certified under this section is exempt
64 from:

65 (a) Additional local training.

66 (b) Local ordinances relating to water and fertilizer use
67 blackout periods or restrictions, unless a state of emergency is
68 declared. The certified person must continue to coordinate with
69 the local government to ensure that he or she adheres to the
70 comprehensive best management practices for that specific
71 community.

72 (10)(7) This section does not exempt a person certified
73 under this section from complying with the rules and
74 requirements for basin management action plans set forth in s.
75 403.067(7) if the golf course is located in an area within a
76 basin management action plan.

77 (11)(a)(8)(a) The turfgrass science program may provide the
78 certification status of persons certified under this section to
79 local and state governmental entities.

80 (b) The turfgrass science program is encouraged to create a
81 registry of persons certified under this section on its website.

82 Section 2. Type two transfer from the Department of
83 Environmental Protection.-

84 (1) All powers, duties, functions, and administrative
85 authority relating to the Golf Course Best Management Practices
86 Certification program within the Department of Environmental
87 Protection are transferred by a type two transfer, as defined in

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88 s. 20.06(2), Florida Statutes, to the Department of Agriculture
89 and Consumer Services.

90 (2) Any binding contract or interagency agreement existing
91 before July 1, 2026, between the Department of Environmental
92 Protection, or an entity or agent of the department, and any
93 other agency, entity, or person relating to the Golf Course Best
94 Management Practices Certification program shall continue as a
95 binding contract or agreement for the remainder of the term of
96 such contract or agreement on the successor entity responsible
97 for the program, activity, or functions relative to the contract
98 or agreement.

99 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.