

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/CS/SB 302, 1st Eng. — Coastal Resiliency

by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Environment and Natural Resources Committee; and Senators Garcia, Avila, and Sharief

The bill requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to initiate rulemaking by January 1, 2027, to establish a statewide permitting process for the use of nature-based methods to improve coastal resiliency. The rules must include, among other things, criteria for implementing nature-based methods; procedures for reviewing applications; general permits that avoid significant adverse impacts; incentives for the use of new strategies and technologies, such as 3D printing; and permitting processes that allow failed coastal infrastructure to be replaced with nature-based infrastructure following storm events.

The bill directs DEP to develop design guidelines and standards for the use of green infrastructure or hybrid green-gray infrastructure to address coastal resiliency. The bill also requires DEP and local governments to promote public awareness and education regarding the value of nature-based solutions for coastal resiliency.

In addition, the bill authorizes nature-based solutions to improve coastal resiliency within aquatic preserves, including living seawalls, shoreline and vegetation planting, seagrass planting, wave attenuation devices, and green or hybrid green-gray stormwater infrastructure. It also authorizes the placement of living shorelines and seawalls within the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve and permits minimum dredging and filling to restore and enhance natural systems.

The bill prohibits dredging or filling within the Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve, except for public navigation projects; activities necessary to enhance the preserve or eliminate public health hazards or stagnant waters; and the construction or maintenance of marinas, public boat ramps, piers, and docks. The bill requires that certain authorized dredging or filling be approved by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund only after public notice.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 109-0