

By Senator Stewart

13-01274-19

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1 Senate Resolution

2 A resolution requesting the Florida Fish and Wildlife
3 Conservation Commission to consider relisting the
4 Florida black bear as a threatened species under the
5 Endangered and Threatened Species Act.
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7 WHEREAS, the Florida Senate is concerned with the
8 protection of wildlife, an asset held in the public trust for
9 all citizens, and

10 WHEREAS, the Florida black bear is an iconic species
11 beloved by the vast majority of Floridians, and

12 WHEREAS, after being hunted to near extinction, the Florida
13 black bear was listed as a threatened species on the state's
14 Endangered and Threatened Species List in 1974, and

15 WHEREAS, after public outcry over the cruel and inhumane
16 limited hunting of Florida black bears in 1994, the State of
17 Florida prohibited all hunting of the species, and

18 WHEREAS, amidst a contested and controversial process, the
19 Florida black bear was removed from state-designated threatened
20 status in 2012, and

21 WHEREAS, in 2015, the Florida Fish and Wildlife
22 Conservation Commission passed rules for an annual bear hunt,
23 which was abruptly ended two days into the week-long hunt due to
24 an unusually high number of bear deaths, and

25 WHEREAS, Florida black bears continue to suffer from a loss
26 of habitat and increased death rates on Florida roadways, and

27 WHEREAS, 1000 Friends of Florida estimates that one-third
28 of this state will be developed by 2070, with a human population
29 of 33.7 million, and

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30 WHEREAS, during the past 20 years, more than 8,000 new
31 miles of roadways have been built in this state and more than
32 230 million more daily vehicle miles are driven over such
33 roadways, and

34 WHEREAS, the penalties for poaching Florida black bears are
35 currently so low that they have been recently subjected to
36 torture and acts of animal cruelty, NOW, THEREFORE,

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38 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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40 That the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
41 should examine the protection of the iconic Florida black bear
42 and consider relisting the species as threatened, pursuant to
43 the criteria of the Endangered and Threatened Species Act.