HB 1081

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to Office of the Blue Economy;
amending s. 20.60, F.S.; establishing the Office of
the Blue Economy within the Department of Economic
Opportunity; creating s. 288.93, F.S.; providing a
definition; providing duties of the Office of the Blue
Economy; authorizing the department to adopt rules;
amending s. 403.928, F.S.; conforming provisions to
changes made by the act; creating s. 403.9303, F.S.;
requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic
Research to conduct a biennial evaluation of the blue
economy for inclusion in a certain assessment;
providing requirements for the evaluation; providing
an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section
20.60, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

20.60 Department of Economic Opportunity; creation; powers
and duties.—

(3)(a) The following divisions and offices of the
Department of Economic Opportunity are established:
1. The Division of Strategic Business Development.
2. The Division of Community Development.
3. The Division of Workforce Services.
4. The Division of Finance and Administration.
5. The Division of Information Technology.
6. The Office of the Secretary.
7. The Office of Economic Accountability and Transparency, which shall:
   a. Oversee the department's critical objectives as determined by the secretary and make sure that the department's key objectives are clearly communicated to the public.
   b. Organize department resources, expertise, data, and research to focus on and solve the complex economic challenges facing the state.
   c. Provide leadership for the department's priority issues that require integration of policy, management, and critical objectives from multiple programs and organizations internal and external to the department; and organize and manage external communication on such priority issues.
   d. Promote and facilitate key department initiatives to address priority economic issues and explore data and identify opportunities for innovative approaches to address such economic issues.
   e. Promote strategic planning for the department.
8. The Office of the Blue Economy.

Section 2. Section 288.93, Florida Statutes, is created to read:
288.93 Office of the Blue Economy.—

(1) For purposes of this section, the term "blue economy" means the economic uses of ocean and coastal resources with a focus on sustainable practices that benefit the long-term outlook of relevant industry sectors and the competitive positioning of the state in a global economy affected by climate change, including, but not limited to, maritime industries such as shipyards, marinas, marine terminals, piers, fishing, aquaculture, seafood processing, commercial diving, and marine transportation; floating and amphibious housing; tourism; and outdoor recreational activities, including, but not limited to, boating, and industry sectors dependent on such activities.

(2) The Office of the Blue Economy shall:

(a) Support the state's economy by connecting the state's ocean and coastal resources to economic development strategies that enhance or contribute to the blue economy with a focus on research and development, technological innovation, emerging industries, strategic business recruitment, public and private funding opportunities, and workforce training and education.

(b) Survey state universities and Florida College System institutions on the development of academic research relating to the blue economy across all disciplines. The office shall encourage collaboration between state universities and Florida College System institutions with overlapping areas of academic research. The office shall publish on the department's website
(c) Collaborate with relevant industries to identify economic challenges that may be solved through innovation in the blue economy by commercializing or otherwise providing public access to academic research and resources.

(d) Develop and facilitate a pipeline of academic research, commercialization, accelerator programs, and startup funding.

(e) Publish on the department's website reports on the number, growth, and average wages of jobs included in the blue economy. Such reports shall identify and address any relevant labor shortages projected by the Labor Market Estimating Conference pursuant to s. 216.136(7).

(f) Educate other state and local entities on the interests of the blue economy by participating in the development and implementation of policies relating to the state's use of ocean and coastal resources, including, but not limited to, long-term sustainability, best practices, conservation efforts, ocean and coastal health, restoration and protection of coral reefs, and beach renourishment.

(g) Communicate the state's role as an integral component of the blue economy by promoting the state on national and international platforms and other appropriate forums as the premier destination for convening on pertinent subject matters.
(3) The department may adopt rules to administer this section.

Section 3. Paragraph (f) is added to subsection (1) of section 403.928, Florida Statutes, to read:

403.928 Assessment of water resources and conservation lands.—The Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall conduct an annual assessment of Florida's water resources and conservation lands.

(1) WATER RESOURCES.—The assessment must include all of the following:

(f) Biennially, beginning on January 1, 2023, the evaluation of the state's blue economy required under s. 403.9303.

Section 4. Section 403.9303, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

403.9303 Blue economy evaluation.—

(1) Beginning January 1, 2023, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall conduct a biennial evaluation of the state's blue economy for inclusion in its annual assessment conducted pursuant to s. 403.928.

(2) The evaluation must include the following:

(a) The historical and current contributions to the state's economy from maritime industries, including, but not limited to:

1. Shipyards, marinas, marine terminals, piers, fishing,
aquaculture, seafood processing, commercial diving, and marine transportation.

2. Floating and amphibious housing.

3. Tourism.

4. Outdoor recreational activities, including, but not limited to, boating, and industry sectors dependent on such activities.

(b) Appropriate economic comparisons to other states to identify comparative advantages and disadvantages.

(c) The identification and discussion of any growing, emerging, or new industries that fit within the blue economy structure.

(d) Beginning January 1, 2025, an analysis of the contributions of the blue economy to the state, including, but not limited to, the economic benefits, as defined in s. 288.005(1), of the efforts undertaken by the Office of the Blue Economy pursuant to s. 288.93.

Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.