1	A bill to be entitled							
2	An act relating to aquatic plant management; directing							
3	the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, in							
4	partnership with the Institute of Food and							
5	Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida and							
6	the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University, to							
7	study certain nutrient removal technologies and							
8	mechanical aquatic plant management techniques within							
9	the Lake Okeechobee watershed; providing study							
10	requirements; directing the commission to submit a							
11	report to the Governor and Legislature by a specified							
12	date; providing report requirements; providing an							
13	appropriation; providing an effective date.							
14								
15	WHEREAS, the health of the state's waterbodies is							
16	intricately connected to the wellbeing of our state, its							
17	residents, wildlife, and economy, and							
18	WHEREAS, legacy nutrients derived from the treatment of							
19	invasive vegetation and unconsolidated biomass can contribute to							
20	degraded water quality, and							
21	WHEREAS, removing legacy nutrients by physically removing							
22	invasive plants and biomass will improve water quality and help							
23	combat algal blooms, and							
24	WHEREAS, innovative pilot projects involving extraction of							
25	nutrient rich matter and biomass harvesting technologies have							
	Page 1 of 4							

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26	demonstrated success in significantly reducing the amount of					
27	undesirable nutrients in the state's waters, and					
28	WHEREAS, physically removing unwanted vegetation and the					
29	nutrients contained therein will improve the health and ecology					
30	of the state's waters, benefit anglers and other fishing					
31	enthusiasts, and encourage tourism, and					
32	WHEREAS, repurposing legacy nutrients trapped in our					
33	waterways will improve local economies by allowing for a new,					
34	natural, and local source of soil amendments or compost for					
35	agricultural purposes that will also give way to innovation and					
36	job creation in the state, NOW, THEREFORE,					
37						
38	Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:					
39						
40	Section 1. (1) The Fish and Wildlife Conservation					
41	Commission, in partnership with the Institute of Food and					
42	Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida and the Water					
43	School at Florida Gulf Coast University, shall study the					
44	strategic use of innovative biomass nutrient removal					
45	technologies and mechanical aquatic plant management techniques					
46	where ecologically and technically feasible within the Lake					
47	Okeechobee watershed.					
48	(2) At a minimum, the study must:					
49	(a) Determine the benefits and drawbacks of biomass					
50	nutrient removal technologies and mechanical aquatic plant					

Page 2 of 4

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51 management techniques. (b) 52 Document the reduction in nutrients for each aquatic 53 plant acre mechanically harvested on an acre-for-acre basis. 54 (c) If hay has been applied, analyze the harvested hay to 55 provide data on nutrient content and soil nutrient content. The 56 data should provide metrics for nutrient removal and nutrient 57 application to upland sites and the feasibility of both. (d) Provide traceability and accountability for total 58 59 nutrient removal. 60 (e) Determine the feasibility and sustainability of 61 increased scalability of biomass nutrient removal technologies and mechanical aquatic plant management techniques statewide. 62 The commission shall submit to the Governor, President 63 (3) 64 of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by 65 February 1, 2023, a report on the study of the strategic use of 66 innovative biomass nutrient removal technologies and mechanical aquatic plant management techniques, including recommendations 67 68 for statutory changes. 69 Section 2. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the sum of \$1.5 70 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is 71 appropriated to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. 72 Of these funds, \$1 million must be used for mechanical 73 harvesting in Lake Okeechobee and \$500,000 must be used to 74 contract with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at 75 the University of Florida and the Water School at Florida Gulf

Page 3 of 4

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FLORIDA	HOUSE	OF REP	RESENTA	TIVES
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76 Coast University to study the strategic use of innovative

- 77 biomass nutrient removal technologies and mechanical aquatic
- 78 plant management techniques pursuant to this act.
- 79 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.

Page 4 of 4

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