

**By** the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources; and  
Senator Garcia

592-01713-26

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to nature-based solutions for improving coastal resilience; creating s. 380.0938, F.S.; defining terms; requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to adopt rules and guidelines for nature-based solutions for improving coastal resilience; providing requirements for such rules and guidelines; requiring the department, in consultation with the Division of Insurance Agent and Agency Services of the Department of Financial Services, to conduct a statewide feasibility study regarding the value of nature-based solutions being used for a specified purpose; requiring the department to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, Florida's coastline is a critical state resource that benefits the public interest by providing economic benefits, such as flood control, fishing, recreation, and navigation, and natural habitat and biodiversity functions, such as improved water quality and habitat for endangered and threatened species and other flora and fauna, and

WHEREAS, rising sea levels and an increasing frequency of adverse weather events pose a significant risk to people and property along the coastline and threaten the public benefits and functions offered by the coastline, and

WHEREAS, as identified in the Miami-Dade Back Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study, nature-based solutions,

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including mangrove stands and living seawalls, can play an essential role in improving coastal resilience and mitigating harm to this state's coastlines, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature intends to promote state and local efforts to restore mangrove forests along the coastline and further study the impact of other nature-based solutions on this state's coastal resilience and economic development, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

Section 1. Section 380.0938, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

380.0938 Nature-based solutions for improving coastal resilience.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Gray infrastructure" means the use of conventionally engineered structures to manage stormwater and mitigate flooding.

(b) "Green infrastructure" means the use of natural systems to manage stormwater, improve water quality, and mitigate flooding.

(c) "Hybrid infrastructure" means infrastructure that combines the use of gray and green infrastructure.

(d) "Nature-based solutions" means the use of natural features and processes to reduce risks from hazards, such as flooding and erosion.

(2) The Department of Environmental Protection shall adopt rules and guidelines for the implementation of nature-based

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59 solutions to improve coastal resilience. The rules and  
60 guidelines must, at a minimum, do all of the following:

61 (a) Provide methods and practices to mitigate erosion in  
62 areas of critical state concern.

63 (b) Provide a framework for developers to avoid or mitigate  
64 impacts on existing mangrove stands.

65 (c) Encourage local governmental entities to develop or  
66 participate in:

67 1. Mangrove replanting and hydrological restoration  
68 programs; and

69 2. Oyster reef, salt marsh, and coral reef restoration.

70 (d) Create mechanisms that identify and monitor threats to  
71 mangroves.

72 (e) Provide for the protection of barrier and spoil  
73 islands.

74 (f) Provide a framework for the implementation of nature-  
75 based solutions, which must include, but need not be limited to,  
76 all of the following:

77 1. Beach renourishment.

78 2. Dune restoration and reinforcement.

79 3. Wetland restoration.

80 4. Reef restoration.

81 5. Living seawalls.

82 6. Shoreline and vegetation planting.

83 7. Stormwater planters.

84 8. Permeable pavements.

85 9. Ecologically sound building materials.

86 10. Green infrastructure.

87 (g) Provide a framework for local governments to identify

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88 vulnerable public and private properties along coastlines so  
89 that such entities may create local protection and restoration  
90 zone programs or projects that implement nature-based solutions  
91 through the Resilient Florida Grant Program pursuant to s.  
92 380.093(3).

93 (h) Encourage local governments to promote awareness of the  
94 value of nature-based solutions, including wetland and  
95 floodplain preservation and restoration, through education  
96 campaigns.

97 (i) Provide for the protection, maintenance, continued  
98 access to, and navigation of the marked channel and the right-  
99 of-way of the Florida Intracoastal Waterway as defined in s.  
100 327.02.

101 (j) Create permitting incentives and approval processes for  
102 the use of new strategies and technologies, such as 3D printing,  
103 for living shorelines and nature-based solutions.

104 (k) Provide for the development of workforce training that  
105 includes flood and sea level rise research methods, predictive  
106 strategies, and adaptation and mitigation strategies. The  
107 department shall provide incentives to local communities that  
108 apply for funding through the Workforce Development  
109 Capitalization Incentive Grant Program pursuant to s. 1011.801  
110 to implement such workforce training.

111 (l) Develop methodology for determining whether a green  
112 infrastructure project is not contrary to the public interest or  
113 is clearly in the public interest pursuant to s. 373.414(1)(a).

114 (m) Streamline the permitting process under s. 373.4131 for  
115 green infrastructure projects.

116 (n) Streamline permitting, after designated storm events or

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disasters, for the replacement of failed coastal infrastructure  
with hybrid infrastructure that follows established stormwater  
infrastructure design guidelines.

(o) Provide guidance on the optimal combination of nature-  
based solutions and hybrid infrastructure to address sea level  
rise and mitigate the impact of storm surges.

(p) Model the projected effects, including flood risk  
reduction, socioeconomic benefits, and environmental benefits,  
of the integration of hybrid infrastructure designs.

(3) The department, in consultation with the Division of  
Insurance Agent and Agency Services within the Department of  
Financial Services, shall conduct a statewide feasibility study  
to determine the value of nature-based solutions for coastal  
flood risk reduction within coastal communities to reduce  
insurance premiums and improve local governments' community  
ratings in the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating  
System. The department shall submit a report on the findings of  
the study to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the  
Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2027.

Section 2. For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the sum of  
\$250,000 in nonrecurring funds from the Resilient Florida Trust  
Fund is appropriated to the Department of Environmental  
Protection to conduct the feasibility study for coastal flood  
risk reduction required by this act.

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