

CS/HB 495

2026

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to golf course best management practices certification; transferring, renumbering, and amending s. 403.9339, F.S.; providing a short title; providing legislative findings and intent regarding golf course best management practices certification; defining the term "department"; conforming cross-references; providing for a type two transfer of the Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification program in the Department of Environmental Protection to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 403.9339, Florida Statutes, is transferred, renumbered as section 604.75, Florida Statutes, and amended to read:

604.75 403.9339 Golf course best management practices certification.—

(1) SHORT TITLE.—This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification Act."

(2) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—The Legislature finds

26 that, due to the foundational agricultural nature of golf
27 courses and since the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
28 Services oversees best management practices programs for sod
29 growing operations and for the green industry, it is appropriate
30 for the department to oversee golf course best management
31 practices certification.

32 (3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term
33 "department" means the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
34 Services.

35 (4) (1) To provide a means of documenting and ensuring
36 compliance with best management practices for fertilizer
37 application to golf courses, the turfgrass science program at
38 the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural
39 Sciences, in coordination with the department, shall administer
40 a certification for golf course best management practices.

41 (5) (2) The turfgrass science program, in cooperation with
42 the department, shall:

43 (a) Provide training and testing programs in golf course
44 best management practices and may issue certificates
45 demonstrating satisfactory completion of the training.

46 (b) Approve training and testing programs in golf course
47 best management practices that are equivalent to or more
48 comprehensive than the programs provided by the turfgrass
49 science program under this subsection paragraph (a). Such
50 programs must be reviewed and reapproved by the turfgrass

51 science program if significant changes are made.

52 (6)~~(3)~~ To obtain a golf course best management practices
53 certification, an applicant must submit to the turfgrass science
54 program a copy of the training certificate issued under
55 subsection (5) ~~subsection (2)~~.

56 (7)~~(4)~~ A golf course best management practices
57 certification issued under this section expires 4 years after
58 the date of issuance. Upon expiration of the certification, or
59 after a grace period of not more than 30 days after the
60 expiration date, a recertification may be issued.

61 (8)~~(5)~~ To obtain a golf course best management practices
62 recertification, an applicant must submit to the turfgrass
63 science program proof of having completed 8 classroom hours of
64 continuing education, of which at least 2 hours must address
65 fertilizer best management practices.

66 (9)~~(6)~~ A person certified under this section is exempt
67 from:

68 (a) Additional local training.

69 (b) Local ordinances relating to water and fertilizer use
70 blackout periods or restrictions, unless a state of emergency is
71 declared. The certified person must continue to coordinate with
72 the local government to ensure that he or she adheres to the
73 comprehensive best management practices for that specific
74 community.

75 (10)~~(7)~~ This section does not exempt a person certified

76 under this section from complying with the rules and
77 requirements for basin management action plans set forth in s.
78 403.067(7) if the golf course is located in an area within a
79 basin management action plan.

80 (11) (a) (8) (a) The turfgrass science program may provide
81 the certification status of persons certified under this section
82 to local and state governmental entities.

83 (b) The turfgrass science program is encouraged to create
84 a registry of persons certified under this section on its
85 website.

86 **Section 2.** Type two transfer from the Department of
87 Environmental Protection.—

88 (1) All powers, duties, functions, records, offices,
89 personnel, associated administrative support positions,
90 property, pending issues, existing contracts, administrative
91 authority, administrative rules, and unexpended balances of
92 appropriations, allocations, and other funds relating to the
93 Golf Course Best Management Practices Certification program
94 within the Department of Environmental Protection are
95 transferred by a type two transfer, as defined in s. 20.06(2),
96 Florida Statutes, to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
97 Services.

98 (2) Any binding contract or interagency agreement existing
99 before July 1, 2026, between the Department of Environmental
100 Protection, or an entity or agent of the department, and any

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101 other agency, entity, or person relating to the Golf Course Best
102 Management Practices Certification program shall continue as a
103 binding contract or agreement for the remainder of the term of
104 such contract or agreement on the successor entity responsible
105 for the program, activity, or functions relative to the contract
106 or agreement.

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