

By Senator Truenow

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to golf courses; 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
that, due to the foundational agricultural nature of golf
courses and since the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
Services oversees best management practices programs for sod
growing operations and for the green industry, it is appropriate
for the department to oversee golf course best management

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practices certification. Certified participants must abide by the best management practices governing the application of fertilizer on sod.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term “department” means the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

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

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

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

(b) Approve training and testing programs in golf course best management practices that are equivalent to or more comprehensive than the programs provided by the turfgrass science program under this subsection ~~paragraph (a)~~. Such programs must be reviewed and reapproved by the turfgrass science program if significant changes are made.

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

(7)~~(4)~~ A golf course best management practices certification issued under this section expires 4 years after

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the date of issuance. Upon expiration of the certification, or after a grace period of not more than 30 days after the expiration date, a recertification may be issued.

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

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

(a) Additional local training.

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

(10)~~(7)~~ This section does not exempt a person certified under this section from complying with the rules and requirements for basin management action plans set forth in s. 403.067(7) if the golf course is located in an area within a basin management action plan.

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

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

Section 2. Type two transfer from the Department of Environmental Protection.

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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
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.