

CHAPTER 97-272

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 876

An act relating to license plates; amending ss. 320.08056, 320.08058, F.S.; creating a Sea Turtle license plate; providing for the distribution of annual use fees received from the sale of such plates; amending s. 370.12, F.S.; creating a marine turtle grants program within the Department of Environmental Protection; providing a contingent effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (s) is added to subsection (4) of section 320.08056, Florida Statutes, 1996 Supplement, to read:

320.08056 Specialty license plates.—

(4) The following license plate annual use fees shall be collected for the appropriate specialty license plates:

(s) Sea Turtle license plate, \$17.50.

Section 2. Subsection (19) is added to section 320.08058, Florida Statutes, 1996 Supplement, to read:

320.08058 Specialty license plates.—

(19) SEA TURTLE LICENSE PLATES.—

(a) The department shall develop a Sea Turtle license plate as provided in this section. The word "Florida" must appear at the top of the plate, the words "Helping Sea Turtles Survive" must appear at the bottom of the plate, and the image of a sea turtle must appear in the center of the plate.

(b)1. The annual use fees shall be deposited in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The first \$500,000 in annual revenue shall be used by the Florida Marine Turtle Protection Program to conduct sea turtle protection, research, and recovery programs. The remaining annual use proceeds shall be used by the Department of Environmental Protection for sea turtle conservation activities, except that up to 30 percent of the remaining annual use fee proceeds shall be annually dispersed through the marine turtle grants program as provided in s. 370.12(1)(h).

Section 3. Paragraph (h) is added to subsection (1) of section 370.12, Florida Statutes, 1996 Supplement, to read:

370.12 Marine animals; regulation.—

(1) PROTECTION OF MARINE TURTLES.—

(h) The department shall provide grants to coastal local governments, education institutions, and Florida-based nonprofit organizations to conduct marine turtle research, conservation, and education activities within the state. The department shall adopt by rule procedures for submitting grant applications and criteria for allocating available funds. The criteria must include the scope of the proposed activity, the relevance of the proposed activity to the recovery plans for marine turtles, the demand and public support for the proposed activity, the duration of the proposed activity, the availability of alternative funding, and the estimated cost of the activity. The secretary of the department shall appoint a committee of at least five members, including at least two nongovernmental representatives, to consider and choose grant recipients from proposals submitted by eligible entities. Committee members shall not receive any compensation from the department.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 1997.

Approved by the Governor May 30, 1997.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 30, 1997.