

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 308

An act relating to specialty license plates; amending s. 320.08058, F.S.; revising the use of annual use fees from the sale of Sea Turtle license plates; providing an appropriation; repealing s. 370.12(1)(h), F.S., which provides for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to provide grants to conduct marine turtle research, conservation, and education activities; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (19) of section 320.08058, Florida Statutes, is amended 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) The first \$500,000 of annual use fees shall be deposited in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund in the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and. 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 next \$215,000 in annual use fees shall be distributed to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation to fund sea turtle research and education programs. The Caribbean Conservation Corporation shall annually distribute assigned funds through a Sea Turtle Grants Program that supports sea turtle research and education activities of Florida-based nonprofit groups, education and research institutions, and coastal counties in this state. The Caribbean Conservation Corporation shall write and publish procedures for submitting grant applications and criteria for allocating available funds, and shall appoint a technical advisory committee, composed of at least five members, including two representatives from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, to establish funding priorities and select grant recipients from proposals submitted by eligible entities. Two of the members shall be selected from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; one member shall be selected on a rotating biennial basis from a county bordering on the Atlantic Coast with sea turtle nesting sites; one member shall be selected on a rotating biennial basis from a county bordering on the Gulf Coast with sea turtle nesting sites; one member shall be the executive director of the Caribbean Conservation Corporation; and two members shall be selected at large. Any additional annual revenue shall be distributed as follows: 70 percent shall be deposited in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund and used by the Florida Marine Turtle Protection Program for sea turtle conservation activities and 30 percent shall be assigned to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation for distribution through the Sea Turtle Grants Program. A maximum of 15 percent of

the funds distributed to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation may be expended for administrative costs directly associated with the grants program, and a maximum of 10 percent may be used to promote and market the Sea Turtle license plate. Funds received by the Caribbean Conservation Corporation from the Sea Turtle license plate or the Sea Turtle Grants Program and funds received by any grant recipient of the Sea Turtle Grants Program may not be used for litigation. Additional license plate revenue, up to an amount not exceeding 30 percent of the total annual revenue, shall be dispersed annually through the marine turtle grants program as provided in s. 370.12(1)(h). The remaining annual use proceeds shall be used by the Florida Marine Turtle Protection Program for sea turtle conservation activities.

Section 2. For fiscal year 2003-2004 there is appropriated to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission from the accumulated sea turtle grant moneys in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund the amount of \$350,000. That amount shall be transferred to the Caribbean Conservation Corporation to fund the sea turtle grant program subject to the limitations and provisions of section 320.08058(19)(b), Florida Statutes. For fiscal year 2003-2004, any remaining sea turtle license plate funds in the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund shall be used by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for sea turtle research and management activities.

Section 3. Paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section 370.12, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.

Approved by the Governor June 5, 2003.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 5, 2003.