

# HB198 INTRODUCED



1 HB198  
2 646WZZ3-1  
3 By Representatives Faulkner, Colvin, Woods  
4 RFD: Ways and Means General Fund  
5 First Read: 05-Feb-25



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SYNOPSIS:

The State of Alabama has no system for warning individuals on beaches and coastal areas of an imminent threat to public safety posed by sharks.

This bill would establish a system under the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to warn individuals when a shark is sighted in waters near a beach or shoreline by providing for alerts to be sent to mobile cellular devices and to first responders on duty.

This bill would further provide for the assistance of other state departments and agencies and local first responder organizations in the development and operation of the shark alert system and the inclusion in the system of beaches and shorelines that are private property.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to public safety; to establish a shark alert system for Baldwin and Mobile Counties; to provide for the development, implementation, and operation of the alert system



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29 by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; to  
30 provide for the assistance of other state departments,  
31 agencies, and political subdivisions to the Department of  
32 Conservation and Natural Resources; and to set minimum  
33 conditions and requirements for a shark alert system.

34 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

35 Section 1. (a) For the purposes of this section, the  
36 following terms have the following meanings:

37 (1) ALERT SYSTEM. The shark alert system.

38 (2) BEACHES AND COASTAL AREAS, BEACH OR SHORELINE. The  
39 terms include beaches and shorelines that face the Gulf of  
40 Mexico or Mobile Bay, and also includes beaches and shorelines  
41 that face a bay, canal, channel, estuary, inlet, or waterway.

42 (3) COMMISSIONER. The Commissioner of Conservation and  
43 Natural Resources.

44 (4) DEPARTMENT. The Department of Conservation and  
45 Natural Resources.

46 (5) FIRST RESPONDER. The term includes lifeguards,  
47 rescue squad members, emergency medical service providers,  
48 public safety telecommunicators, municipal, county, and state  
49 law enforcement officers, including enforcement officers of  
50 the department, and any other emergency management provider  
51 who responds to an emergency situation.

52 (6) SHARK. A shark or any marine species presumed by an  
53 individual to be a shark.

54 (7) WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERT. A text-like message  
55 broadcast from a cell tower to all compatible mobile wireless  
56 or phone devices that are turned on in a geographic area.



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57 (b) (1) There is established an alert system to serve  
58 the beaches and coastal areas in Baldwin and Mobile Counties  
59 to be known as the shark alert system.

60 (2) The alert system shall be developed and implemented  
61 by the commissioner, who shall adopt rules necessary to  
62 accomplish all of the following:

63 a. Implement the alert system.

64 b. Establish operating protocols for activating and  
65 deactivating an alert.

66 c. Establish operating protocols for coordination  
67 during an alert between first responder organizations.

68 d. Secure the full participation in the alert system by  
69 all owners or managers of beaches or shorelines under private  
70 ownership which are accessible to customers, guests, invitees,  
71 licensees, or patrons.

72 (3) In the development and implementation of the alert  
73 system, the commissioner shall receive upon request the full  
74 cooperation, including expertise and information, of other  
75 departments and agencies of the State of Alabama or a  
76 political subdivision thereof, including, but not limited to,  
77 the following:

78 a. The Alabama Emergency Management Agency, including  
79 local emergency management organizations.

80 b. The Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency.

81 c. The Office of Emergency Medical Services of the  
82 Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Gulf  
83 Emergency Medical Services System, and all first responder  
84 organizations that employ or use emergency medical services



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85 personnel licensed under Chapter 18, Title 22 of the Code of  
86 Alabama 1975.

87 d. The Alabama Public Service Commission.

88 e. The Offices of Sheriff of Baldwin and Mobile  
89 Counties.

90 f. The municipalities with jurisdiction over beach or  
91 shoreline, including the police and other municipal  
92 departments that manage public beaches, parks, and piers.

93 (4) The commissioner may enter into agreements with any  
94 department or agency of the State of Alabama or any political  
95 subdivision, including, but not limited to, those listed in  
96 subdivision (3), to provide necessary resources and support  
97 for the implementation and operation of the alert system.

98 (5)a. The commissioner may adopt a schedule of civil  
99 fines for noncompliance with rules adopted pursuant to  
100 paragraph (2)d. by owners and managers of private beaches or  
101 shorelines, up to no more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000).

102 b. The department may bring an action for collection of  
103 any civil fine instituted under paragraph a. in the Circuit  
104 Court of Baldwin or Mobile County as applicable.

105 (c) The alert system shall be activated upon the  
106 occurrence of either of the following events:

107 (1) When the department receives a report of a shark  
108 attacking an individual.

109 (2) When the department receives a report of a shark at  
110 a location from which the shark would pose an imminent danger  
111 to an individual at or near a beach or shoreline.

112 (d) The alert system shall include at a minimum all of



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113 the following:

114 (1) A wireless emergency alert that is transmitted to  
115 all mobile communication devices within a defined distance of  
116 a beach or shoreline to which a shark poses an imminent  
117 danger.

118 (2) Dispatch of the alert to all first responders who  
119 are on duty within a defined mileage radius to a beach or  
120 shoreline to which a shark poses an imminent danger.

121 (3) A beach flag signal that indicates an alert is  
122 activated and which means that no individual is permitted in  
123 the water.

124 Section 2. This act shall become effective on October  
125 1, 2025.