

HB92 INTRODUCED



1 HB92
2 3CUDEVZ-1
3 By Representative Brown
4 RFD: Ports, Waterways & Intermodal Transit
5 First Read: 04-Feb-25
6 PFD: 24-Jan-25



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

SYNOPSIS:

This bill would create the Alabama Seagrass Restoration Task Force to address and remediate the loss of seagrass within state marine waters.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to state marine waters; to create the Alabama Seagrass Restoration Task Force; and to provide for its membership and duties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a collaborative and coordinated effort among public and private research entities to develop restoration technologies and approaches to address the loss of seagrass within state marine waters and the cascading ecological and economic impacts of that loss to this state.

Section 2. (a) The Alabama Seagrass Restoration Task Force is established to lead and expedite formulating, testing, and implementing innovative, effective, cost-efficient, and environmentally sustainable technologies to restore coastal seagrass ecosystems by building upon



HB92 INTRODUCED

29 research and efforts within the public and private sectors.

30 (b) The task force shall consist of the following
31 members:

32 (1) The executive director of the Dauphin Island Sea
33 Lab to serve as a cochair.

34 (2) The President of the University of South Alabama,
35 or his or her designee, to serve as a cochair.

36 (3) The Chair of the House of Representatives Ports,
37 Waterways, and Intermodal Transit Committee.

38 (4) The Commissioner of Conservation and Natural
39 Resources, or his or her designee who has expertise in
40 seagrass ecosystems.

41 (5) The Director of the Mobile Bay National Estuary
42 Program.

43 (6) A member from a private commercial enterprise
44 appointed by the Governor.

45 (7) A member from a public or private university in
46 this state other than the University of South Alabama
47 appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

48 (8) Two members from a non-university public or private
49 marine environmental organization with one member appointed by
50 the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one member
51 appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

52 (c) The task force shall develop and administer in
53 accordance with this act a 10-year Alabama Seagrass
54 Restoration Plan to implement the tools, approaches, and
55 technologies developed pursuant hereto.

56 (d) If a vacancy occurs for any appointed member, the



HB92 INTRODUCED

57 respective appointing authority shall appoint a new member.

58 (e) The appointing authorities shall coordinate their
59 appointments to assure the task force membership is inclusive
60 and reflects the racial, gender, geographic, urban, rural, and
61 economic diversity of this state.

62 (f) Task force members shall serve without compensation
63 but may be reimbursed for actual expenses associated with
64 attending meetings by their respective authority, entity, or
65 department according to applicable law.

66 (g) The initial meeting of the task force shall be
67 called by the cochairs and shall be held by January 1, 2026.
68 Thereafter the task force shall meet no less than twice per
69 year.

70 (h) The Dauphin Island Sea Lab shall provide all
71 necessary staff and support, including meeting space, to the
72 task force for the performance of its duties.

73 (i) Not later than the first day of each regular
74 session of the Legislature, the task force shall provide a
75 report of its progress made in developing and administering
76 the 10-year Alabama Seagrass Restoration Plan and its
77 findings, conclusions, accomplishments, priorities for
78 subsequent years, and recommendations for proposed
79 legislation, if any, to the Governor, President Pro Tempore of
80 the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the
81 Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources.

82 Section 3. (a) The Dauphin Island Sea Lab shall be the
83 fiscal agent for all funds appropriated to the task force to
84 achieve the goals of the task force.



HB92 INTRODUCED

85 (b) The Dauphin Island Sea Lab, with the consent of the
86 task force, may use funds appropriated to the task force to
87 facilitate engagement with other relevant marine science and
88 technology development organizations in this state, nation,
89 and around the world to pursue applied research and technology
90 for the successful restoration of seagrass ecosystems.

91 (c) The Dauphin Island Sea Lab may retain funds
92 appropriated to the task force for administrative costs
93 expended by the sea lab pursuant to this section.

94 (d) The task force shall leverage, to the extent
95 possible, all state-appropriated funds with additional funds
96 from private and federal sources.

97 Section 4. Upon the completion of research conducted
98 pursuant to this act and recommendations of the task force,
99 subject to appropriation by the Legislature, the Department of
100 Conservation and Natural Resources shall implement seagrass
101 restoration projects in accordance with the 10-year Alabama
102 Seagrass Restoration Plan in waters of this state.

103 Section 5. This act shall become effective on October
104 1, 2025.