



**House Ports, Waterways and Intermodal Transit
Reported Substitute for HB38**

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4 **SYNOPSIS:**

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

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10 A BILL

11 TO BE ENTITLED

12 AN ACT

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

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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

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



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29 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 a 10-year Alabama
53 Seagrass and Sea Oats Restoration Plan to recommend the tools,
54 approaches, and technologies developed pursuant to this act.

55 (d) If a vacancy occurs for any appointed member, the
56 respective appointing authority shall appoint a new member.



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

61 (f) (1) The legislative members of the task force shall
62 be entitled to their legislative compensation, per diem, and
63 travel expenses for each day they attend a meeting of the task
64 force pursuant to Section 49 of the Constitution of Alabama of
65 2022.

70 (g) The initial meeting of the task force shall be
71 called by the cochairs and shall be held by January 1, 2027.
72 Thereafter the task force shall meet no less than twice per
73 year.

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



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85 Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources.

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

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

95 (c) The Dauphin Island Sea Lab may retain funds
96 appropriated to the task force for administrative costs
97 expended by the sea lab pursuant to this act.

98 (d) In addition to any state-appropriated funds, the
99 task force may accept gifts, grants, and donations from
100 private and federal sources.

101 Section 4. This act shall become effective on October
102 1, 2026.