

HJR270 ENROLLED



1 HJR270
2 I3TYM6Z-2
3 By Representatives Pringle, Ledbetter
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 19-Mar-26



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1 Enrolled, An Act,

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3 AUTHORIZING AN INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT BY THE
4 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA OF MAINTENANCE DREDGING
5 OPERATIONS IN MOBILE BAY.

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7 WHEREAS, the continued maintenance of expanded
8 waterway depths and widths is vital to the economic
9 prosperity and navigational safety of the great State of
10 Alabama; and

11 WHEREAS, the health of Mobile Bay is Coastal
12 Alabama's greatest natural resource and is of critical
13 importance to the great State of Alabama and its tourism
14 industry, the commercial and recreational fishing industry,
15 and property values; and

16 WHEREAS, the University of South Alabama, through the
17 Stokes School of Marine and Environmental Sciences,
18 possesses the specialized expertise and academic
19 independence necessary to evaluate complex coastal
20 ecosystems; and

21 WHEREAS, the methods utilized for the disposal of
22 dredged material carry distinct environmental profiles that
23 require rigorous scientific scrutiny; and

24 WHEREAS, it is essential to distinguish between
25 immediate ecological shifts and chronic environmental
26 changes occurring over extended periods; and

27 WHEREAS, the University of South Alabama (the
28 University) is the appropriate entity to perform an



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29 independent assessment of the environmental impacts
30 associated with the federal maintenance dredging program and
31 its associated disposal methods; and

32 WHEREAS, it is necessary that this study be completed
33 within a duration of one year from its official commencement
34 date; and

35 WHEREAS, the methodology of said study shall include
36 a rigorous synthesis of all existing published research and
37 electronic data, including previous research from federal
38 and state agencies, academic institutions, and
39 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and

40 WHEREAS, the core objectives of the study shall be a
41 comprehensive evaluation of short-term impacts, long-term
42 chronic effects on habitat and biodiversity, and a
43 comparative analysis and impact of disposal methods; and

44 WHEREAS, the study shall also include a gap analysis
45 to identify impacts requiring further study to achieve the
46 core objectives of the assessment, including a strategic
47 plan and estimated funding needs to address information
48 voids; and

49 WHEREAS, the assessment shall provide actionable
50 mitigation strategies to minimize or offset any identified
51 negative environmental consequences of the dredging
52 disposal; and

53 WHEREAS, the University is further encouraged to
54 conduct an economic analysis evaluating the implications and
55 risks of failing to maintain the authorized depth and width,
56 as well as potential implications related to tourism and



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57 seafood; and

58 WHEREAS, the Stokes School of Marine and
59 Environmental Sciences is authorized to conduct limited,
60 targeted field surveys to directly address gaps identified
61 in the research; and

62 WHEREAS, the University shall ensure all results are
63 accessible to the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
64 now therefore,

65 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
66 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the University of South
67 Alabama is hereby authorized and requested to execute the
68 assessment according to the directives and objectives set
69 forth above.



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Speaker of the House of Representatives

President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

House of Representatives

I hereby certify that the within Act originated in
and was passed by the House 31-Mar-26.

John Treadwell
Clerk

Senate

09-Apr-26

Adopted