

**JOIN US IN SAVING OUR WATERS AND FISHERIES**  
**Your help is needed today! Florida's Manatees and Fish need you now!**

Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez's bill SB198 is still sitting in Senate sub-committees. If passed, along with House Bill 349, in the next few weeks, it will allow developers to destroy the states' currently protected seagrass beds by buying mitigation credits to re-plant the seagrass elsewhere. This opens a new level of development and dredging for water-based projects.

Importance of Seagrass:

- Seagrass meadows provide critical ecosystem services, including fisheries enhancement, coastal erosion reduction, and water quality improvement.
- Seagrasses are believed to be the third most valuable ecosystem in the world (only preceded by estuaries and wetlands) – by cleaning the surrounding water and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Seagrasses are known as the “lungs of the sea” because one square meter of seagrass can generate 10 liters of oxygen per day via photosynthesis. *Smithsonian Ocean*, <https://ocean.si.edu>

The problem:

- Seagrass mitigation banks have been mostly unsuccessful since it can take years to grow and the majority fail.
- Seagrass has declined statewide: over 46,000 acres in the past decade, because it requires clean water to survive. And, water quality has declined due to fertilizer runoff, wastewater discharges, polluted water, and water mismanagement of Lake Okeechobee.
- A record 1100 manatees died in 2021 mainly due to starvation, whose primary food source is seagrass.

How you can help:

- Review some of the articles below for more information.
- Speak out to our state legislature with your concerns.
- **There's no time to spare – this is happening now!**

Representative James Vernon “Jim” Mooney, Jr. for related House Bill 349:  
[jim.mooney@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:jim.mooney@myfloridahouse.gov) (850) 717-5120

Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez: [rodriguez.anamaria.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:rodriguez.anamaria.web@flsenate.gov) (850) 487-5039

*Committee on Community Affairs members who are now reviewing the bill:*

Senator Jennifer Bradley	<a href="mailto:Bradley.jennifer.web@flsenate.gov">Bradley.jennifer.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(850-487-5167)
Senator Ileana Garcia	<a href="mailto:Garcia.ileana.web@flsenate.gov">Garcia.ileana.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(305-442-6841)
Senator Dennis Baxley	<a href="mailto:Baxley.dennis.web@flsenate.gov">Baxley.dennis.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(352-750-3133)
Senator Jason Brodeur	<a href="mailto:Brodeur.jason.web@flsenate.gov">Brodeur.jason.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(407-333-1802)
Senator Janet Cruz	<a href="mailto:Cruz.janet.web@flsenate.gov">Cruz.janet.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(813-348-1017)
Senator Gary Farmer	<a href="mailto:Farmer.gary.web@flsenate.gov">Farmer.gary.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(954-467-4227)
Senator Ed Hooper	<a href="mailto:Hooper.ed.web@flsenate.gov">Hooper.ed.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(727-771-2102)
Senator Travis Hutson	<a href="mailto:Hutson.travis.web@flsenate.gov">Hutson.travis.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(386-446-7610)
Senator Tina Scott Polsky	<a href="mailto:Polsky.tina.web@flsenate.gov">Polsky.tina.web@flsenate.gov</a>	(561-443-8170)

**Please share this information with friends and neighbors and ask them to call or write as well.** If you feel “uncomfortable” about calling any of the people listed below, you can leave a message for them in the evenings and weekends explaining your opposition to the bill.

Additional Articles:

[https://www.keysnews.com/eedition/page-a1/page\\_0429a401-fdfa-5307-baba-4714b7263647.html](https://www.keysnews.com/eedition/page-a1/page_0429a401-fdfa-5307-baba-4714b7263647.html)

<https://www.tcpalm.com/story/opinion/contributors/2022/01/21/indian-river-lagoon-manatees-dying-dont-kill-seagrass-opinion/6572440001/>

<https://floridapolitics.com/archives/489859-environmental-group-says-more-manatees-will-die-if-floridas-seagrass-mitigation-bill-passes/>

Just a few of the groups opposed to this bill:

- National Audubon Society
- 1000 Friends of Florida
- The Sierra Club
- Florida Bay Forever
- Last Stand
- Lower Keys Guides Association
- Florida Keys Fishing Guides Association
- Florida Keys Boaters Association
- North Cow Key Boaters Association
- Florida Keys Citizens' Coalition
- Friends of the Everglades
- Friends of Biscayne Bay
- League of Women Voters
- Isaak Walton League of America, FL Keys Chapter
- Safer, Cleaner Ships Organization
- Numerous FL WaterKeeper & RiverKeeper Organizations
- Island of Key Largo Federation of Homeowner Associations
- Friends of the Lower Keys (FOLKS)
- Sugarloaf Shored Property Owners Association (SSPOA)