

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/HB 87 — Taking of Bears

by Infrastructure Strategies Committee and Rep. Shoaf and others (CS/CS/SB 632 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; and Senators Simon and Collins)

The bill may be cited as the “Self Defense Act.” It provides that a person is not subject to any administrative, civil, or criminal penalty for taking a bear with lethal force if the person:

- Reasonably believed that his or her action was necessary to avoid an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to himself or herself or to another, an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to a pet, or substantial damage to a dwelling;
- Did not lure the bear with food or attractants for an illegal purpose, including, but not limited to, training dogs to hunt bears;
- Did not intentionally or recklessly place himself or herself or a pet in a situation in which he or she would be likely to need to use lethal force; and
- Notified the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) within 24 hours after using lethal force to take the bear.

The bill requires a bear taken under this section to be disposed of by FWC. In addition, a person who takes a bear under this section may not possess, sell, or dispose of the bear or its parts. The bill directs FWC to adopt rules to implement this section.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2024.

Vote: Senate 24-12; House 83-28