

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1543

TITLE: Natural Alternatives for Transforming and Improving Vegetation and Environment (NATIVE) Act

AUTHOR(S): Senator Arshan Falasiri, Senator Alex Weirichs, Senator Ben Stone

SPONSORS: Senator Griffin Atchison, Senator Lucas Rodriguez, Senator Logan Siemienas, Senator Hunter Monson, Senator Halle Burton

WHEREAS, the University has previously expressed an interest in reducing the amount of pesticides used on campus due to its adverse environmental effects [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the University has previously shown commitment to an agenda of supporting native species on campus grounds, as shown in the Campus Master Plan, which states “the University continues to prohibit non-native invasive plants and selectively removes existing” non-native invasive species [2]; and,

WHEREAS, ensuring the health of the University of Florida’s vibrant environment through strengthening measures such as the further increased presence of native plants and species is conducive to the interests of the University and student body; and,

WHEREAS, increased plant presence has been shown to improve mood, concentration, and air quality [5]; and,

WHEREAS, native plants are more resilient and last much longer than non-native species, requiring less fertilizer, pesticide usage, and resources overall, creating a lessened burden on the Grounds Department and Facility Services budget for plant upkeep and care [1]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for the University of Florida to commit to the promise in the Campus Master Plan to continue using plants native to the North Florida Region across campus.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the University of Florida Student Senate is committed to seeing the proliferation of native greenery across campus

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, that the creation of green spaces throughout campus aids in the Student Senate’s mission of uplifting the student experience and alleviating mental health issues within the student body.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED, the increased use of native greenery will lower the amount of resources required for upkeep and will allow the University of Florida to better allocate these resources to other areas of campus in need.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate is committed to serving all students, and as such, is committed to providing student resources and promoting the mental and physical wellbeing of all individuals within our campus community.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Unlitter UF President Liel Shachr, Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Shawn Hamilton, Office of Sustainability Director Matthew Williams, and Office of Sustainability Senior Programs Director Liz Storn.

[1] <https://www.asla.org/nativeplantssavemoney.aspx>

[2] https://facilities.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/attachments_7_30_-2020-1.pdf

[3] <https://sustainable.ufl.edu/campus-initiatives/land/>

[4] <https://www.eesolutions.net/post/colleges-universities-environmental-issues>

[5] <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/09/090903163947.htm>