

Saw Palmetto Berry Theft Enforcement

BACKGROUND

Theft of saw palmetto berries in South Georgia has taken a direct hit on the pocketbooks of forestland owners in the region. Previously, the value of these berries was nominal and theft was not an issue. However, recent innovations in the medical applications of saw palmetto berry extract has caused the price to skyrocket, and with it, theft of berries. In fact, some forest landowners in Georgia estimate annual losses to due theft in the hundreds of thousands.

The need for a specific law to address berry theft is clear—particularly since Florida passed a similar law two years ago that has pushed more illegal activity north of the state line. This is a critical issue for forest landowners, as having reliable annual revenue streams (like berries or pine straw) are essential to the economic viability of working forests.

SB 407 PROVISIONS

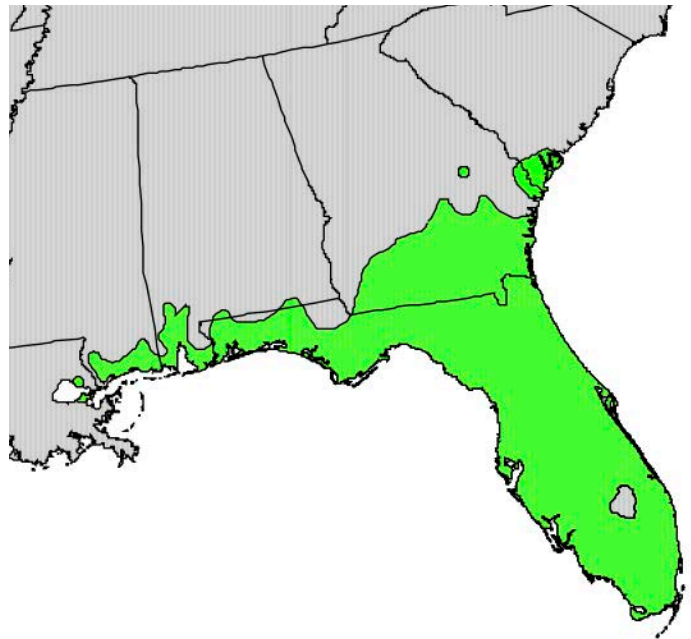
- Creates strong, enforceable supply chain controls through a “Certificate of Harvest” system that will make it easier for law enforcement to distinguish good actors from bad ones.
- Modeled after a successful law that dealt with the rising incidence of pine straw theft several decades ago.
- Increases penalties for those who commit berry theft—punishing bad actors and serving as a powerful deterrent for would-be bad actors.

WHAT ARE SAW PALMETTO BERRIES?

Saw palmetto berries are the fruit of the plant *Serenoa repens* (saw palmetto), which commonly grows on the forest floor in South Georgia and Florida. The berry is now commonly used in supplements to improve prostate health, balance hormone levels, and prevent hair loss in men.



WHERE DO THEY GROW?



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Andres Villegas
President & CEO
andres@gfagrow.org

Tom Beyer
Vice President of Government Affairs
tom@gfagrow.org

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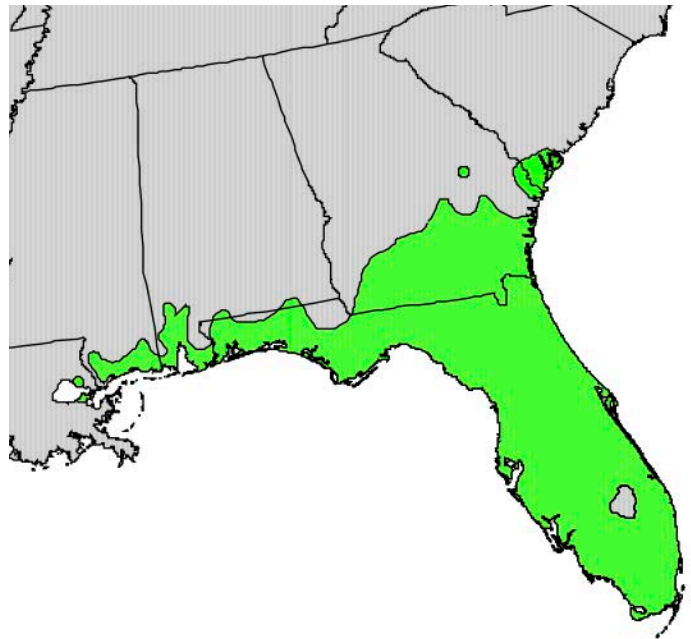
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