

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/HB 273 — Special District Funding

by State Affairs Committee and Rep. Johnson (CS/CS/SB 214 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development; and Senator McClain)

Current law requires agreements for state or federal funds between a state agency and a county or municipality that is a rural community or rural area of opportunity to allow for the state agency to pay invoices to the local government for verified and eligible performance under the agreement. The bill adds special districts located entirely within a county or municipality, or to an independent special district that provides water and wastewater services within a rural area of opportunity, to such agreement requirements. Additionally, the bill clarifies that the provision is not intended to require reimbursement to a rural county, municipality, or special district, but to allow the agency to pay invoices as they become due and to expedite payment requests for these local governments.

The bill revises the definition of “rural community” for the purposes of the Rural Economic Development Initiative to include special districts located in rural counties, as well as to include independent special districts that provide water and wastewater services within a rural area of opportunity. This inclusion will allow these special and independent districts to participate in state financial assistance programs, such as the Rural Infrastructure Fund.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 34-0; House 108-0