

By the Committee on Fiscal Policy; and Senator Simon

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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to rural communities; reenacting and  
3       amending s. 20.60, F.S.; revising the list of  
4       divisions and offices within the Department of  
5       Commerce to conform to changes made by the act;  
6       revising the annual program reports that must be  
7       included in the annual report of the Department of  
8       Commerce; amending s. 163.3168, F.S.; requiring the  
9       state land planning agency to give preference for  
10      technical assistance funding to local governments  
11      located in a rural area of opportunity; requiring the  
12      agency to consult with the Office of Rural Prosperity  
13      when awarding certain funding; amending s. 201.15,  
14      F.S.; requiring that a certain sum be paid to the  
15      credit of the State Transportation Trust Fund for the  
16      exclusive use of the Florida Arterial Road  
17      Modernization Program; amending s. 202.18, F.S.;  
18      redirecting the transfer of certain communication  
19      services tax revenue; amending s. 212.20, F.S.;  
20      revising the distribution of sales and use tax revenue  
21      to include a transfer to fiscally constrained  
22      counties; amending s. 215.971, F.S.; providing  
23      construction regarding agreements funded with federal  
24      or state assistance; requiring the agency to expedite  
25      payment requests from a county, municipality, or rural  
26      area of opportunity for a specified purpose; requiring  
27      each state agency to report to the Office of Rural  
28      Prosperity by a certain date with a summary of certain  
29      information; requiring the office to summarize the

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30 information it receives for its annual report;  
31 amending s. 218.67, F.S.; revising the conditions  
32 required for a county to be considered a fiscally  
33 constrained county; authorizing eligible counties to  
34 receive a distribution of sales and use tax revenue;  
35 revising the sources that the Department of Revenue  
36 must use to determine the amount distributed to  
37 fiscally constrained counties; revising the factors  
38 for allocation of the distribution of revenue to  
39 fiscally constrained counties; requiring that the  
40 computation and amount distributed be calculated based  
41 on a specified rounding algorithm; authorizing  
42 specified uses for the revenue; conforming a cross-  
43 reference; amending s. 288.0001, F.S.; requiring the  
44 Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the  
45 Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government  
46 Accountability (OPPAGA) to prepare a report for a  
47 specified purpose; specifying requirements for the  
48 report; providing that the Office of Economic and  
49 Demographic Research and OPPAGA must be provided with  
50 all data necessary to complete the rural communities  
51 or areas report upon request; authorizing the Office  
52 of Economic and Demographic Research and OPPAGA to  
53 collaborate on all data collection and analysis;  
54 requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic  
55 Research and OPPAGA to submit the report to the  
56 Legislature by a specified date; providing additional  
57 requirements for the report; providing for expiration;  
58 amending s. 288.001, F.S.; requiring the Florida Small

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59 Business Development Center Network to use certain  
60 funds appropriated for a specified purpose;  
61 authorizing the network to dedicate funds to  
62 facilitate certain events; amending s. 288.007, F.S.;  
63 revising which local governments and economic  
64 development organizations seeking to recruit  
65 businesses are required to submit a specified report;  
66 creating s. 288.013, F.S.; providing legislative  
67 findings; creating the Office of Rural Prosperity  
68 within the Department of Commerce; requiring the  
69 Governor to appoint a director, subject to  
70 confirmation by the Senate; providing that the  
71 director reports to and serves at the pleasure of the  
72 secretary of the department; providing the duties of  
73 the office; requiring the office to establish by a  
74 specified date a certain number of regional rural  
75 community liaison centers across this state for a  
76 specified purpose; providing the powers, duties, and  
77 functions of the liaison centers; requiring the  
78 liaison centers, to the extent possible, to coordinate  
79 with certain entities; requiring the liaison centers  
80 to engage with the Rural Economic Development  
81 Initiative (REDI); requiring at least one staff member  
82 of a liaison center to attend the monthly meetings in  
83 person or by means of electronic communication;  
84 requiring the director of the office to submit an  
85 annual report to the Administration Commission in the  
86 Executive Office of the Governor; specifying  
87 requirements for the annual report; requiring that the

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88 annual report also be submitted to the Legislature by  
89 a specified date and published on the office's  
90 website; requiring the director of the office to  
91 attend the next Administration Commission meeting to  
92 present detailed information from the annual report;  
93 requiring OPPAGA to review the effectiveness of the  
94 office by a certain date annually until a specified  
95 date; requiring OPPAGA to review the office at  
96 specified intervals; requiring such reviews to include  
97 certain information to be considered by the  
98 Legislature; requiring that such reports be submitted  
99 to the Legislature; requiring OPPAGA to review certain  
100 strategies from other states; requiring OPPAGA to  
101 submit to the Legislature its findings at certain  
102 intervals; creating s. 288.014, F.S.; providing  
103 legislative findings; requiring the Office of Rural  
104 Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants  
105 Program to provide block grants to eligible  
106 communities; requiring the Office of Economic and  
107 Demographic Research to certify to the Office of Rural  
108 Prosperity certain information by a specified date;  
109 defining the term "growth-impeded"; requiring the  
110 Office of Economic and Demographic Research to certify  
111 annually that a county remains growth-impeded until  
112 such county has positive population growth for a  
113 specified amount of time; providing that such county,  
114 after 3 consecutive years of population growth, is  
115 eligible to participate in the program for 1  
116 additional year; requiring a county eligible for the

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117 program to enter into an agreement with the Office of  
118 Rural Prosperity in order to receive the block grant;  
119 giving such counties broad authority to design their  
120 specific plans; prohibiting the Office of Rural  
121 Prosperity from determining how such counties  
122 implement the block grant; requiring regional rural  
123 community liaison center staff to provide assistance,  
124 upon request; requiring participating counties to  
125 report annually to the Office of Rural Prosperity with  
126 certain information; providing that a participating  
127 county receives a specified amount from funds  
128 appropriated to the program; requiring participating  
129 counties to make all attempts to limit the amount  
130 spent on administrative costs; authorizing  
131 participating counties to contribute other funds for  
132 block grant purposes; requiring participating counties  
133 to hire a renaissance coordinator; providing that  
134 funds from the block grant may be used to hire the  
135 renaissance coordinator; providing the  
136 responsibilities of the renaissance coordinator;  
137 requiring the regional rural community liaison center  
138 staff to provide assistance and training to the  
139 renaissance coordinator, upon request; requiring  
140 participating counties to design a plan to make  
141 targeted investments to achieve population growth and  
142 increase economic vitality; providing requirements for  
143 such plans; requiring participating counties to  
144 develop intergovernmental agreements with certain  
145 entities in order to implement the plan; requiring the

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146 Auditor General to conduct an operational audit every  
147 2 years for a specified purpose; requiring the Office  
148 of Economic and Demographic Research to provide an  
149 annual report on a specified date of renaissance block  
150 grant recipients by county; providing requirements for  
151 the annual report; requiring that the report be  
152 submitted to the Legislature; prohibiting funds  
153 appropriated for the program from being subject to  
154 reversion; providing for an expiration of the section;  
155 creating s. 288.0175, F.S.; creating the Public  
156 Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program within  
157 the Office of Rural Prosperity; defining terms;  
158 requiring the office to contract with one or more  
159 smart technology lead organizations to administer a  
160 grant program for a specified purpose; providing the  
161 criteria for such contracts; requiring that projects  
162 funded by the grant program be included in the  
163 office's annual report; amending s. 288.018, F.S.;  
164 requiring the office, rather than the Department of  
165 Commerce, to establish a grant program to provide  
166 funding for regional economic development  
167 organizations; revising who may apply for such grants;  
168 providing that a grant award may not exceed a certain  
169 amount in a year; providing exceptions to a provision  
170 that the department may expend a certain amount for a  
171 certain purpose; amending s. 288.019, F.S.; revising  
172 the program criteria and procedures that agencies and  
173 organizations of REDI are required to review; revising  
174 the list of impacts each REDI agency and organization

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175 must consider in its review; requiring REDI agencies  
176 and organizations to develop a proposal for  
177 modifications which minimizes the financial and  
178 resource impacts to a rural community; requiring that  
179 ranking of evaluation criteria and scoring procedures  
180 be used only when ranking is a component of the  
181 program; requiring that match requirements be waived  
182 or reduced for rural communities; providing that  
183 donations of land may be treated as in-kind matches;  
184 requiring each agency and organization that applies  
185 for or receives federal funding to request federal  
186 approval to waive or reduce the financial match  
187 requirements, if any, for projects in rural  
188 communities; requiring that proposals be submitted to  
189 the office, rather than the department; requiring each  
190 REDI agency and organization to modify rules or  
191 policies as necessary to reflect the finalized  
192 proposal; requiring that information about authorized  
193 waivers be included on the office's online rural  
194 resource directory; conforming a cross-reference;  
195 amending s. 288.021, F.S.; requiring, when  
196 practicable, the economic development liaison to serve  
197 as the agency representative for REDI; amending s.  
198 288.065, F.S.; defining the term "unit of local  
199 government"; requiring the office to include in its  
200 annual report certain information about the Rural  
201 Community Development Revolving Loan Fund; conforming  
202 provisions to changes made by the act; amending s.  
203 288.0655, F.S.; revising the list of grants that may

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204 be awarded by the office; deleting the authorization  
205 for local match requirements to be waived for a  
206 catalyst site; revising the list of departments the  
207 office must consult with to certify applicants;  
208 requiring the office to include certain information  
209 about the Rural Infrastructure Trust Fund in its  
210 annual report; conforming provisions to changes made  
211 by the act; amending s. 288.0656, F.S.; providing  
212 legislative findings; providing that REDI is created  
213 within the Office of Rural Prosperity, rather than the  
214 department; deleting the definitions of the terms  
215 "catalyst project" and "catalyst site"; requiring that  
216 an alternate for each designated deputy secretary be a  
217 deputy secretary or higher-level staff person;  
218 requiring that the names of such alternates be  
219 reported to the director of the office; requiring at  
220 least one rural liaison to participate in REDI  
221 meetings; requiring REDI to meet at least each month;  
222 deleting a provision that a rural area of opportunity  
223 may designate catalyst projects; requiring REDI to  
224 submit a certain report to the office, rather than to  
225 the department; specifying requirements for such  
226 report; conforming provisions to changes made by the  
227 act; repealing s. 288.06561, F.S., relating to  
228 reduction or waiver of financial match requirements;  
229 amending s. 288.0657, F.S.; requiring the office,  
230 rather than the department, to provide grants to  
231 assist rural communities; providing that such grants  
232 may be used for specified purposes; requiring the



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233 rural liaison to assist those applying for such  
234 grants; providing that marketing grants may include  
235 certain funding; amending s. 288.1226, F.S.; revising  
236 required components of the 4-year marketing plan of  
237 the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation;  
238 repealing s. 288.12266, F.S., relating to the Targeted  
239 Marketing Assistance Program; amending s. 288.9961,  
240 F.S.; revising the definition of the term  
241 "underserved"; requiring the office to consult with  
242 regional rural community liaison centers on  
243 development of a certain strategic plan; requiring  
244 rural liaisons to assist rural communities with  
245 providing feedback in applying for federal grants for  
246 broadband Internet services; requiring the office to  
247 submit reports with specified information to the  
248 Governor and the Legislature within certain  
249 timeframes; repealing s. 290.06561, F.S., relating to  
250 designation of rural enterprise zones as catalyst  
251 sites; amending s. 319.32, F.S.; revising the  
252 disposition of fees collected for certain title  
253 certificates; amending s. 334.044, F.S.; revising the  
254 powers and duties of the Department of Transportation;  
255 amending s. 339.0801, F.S.; revising the allocation of  
256 funds received in the State Transportation Trust Fund;  
257 amending s. 339.2816, F.S.; requiring, rather than  
258 authorizing, that certain funds received from the  
259 State Transportation Trust Fund be used for the Small  
260 County Road Assistance Program; requiring the  
261 department to use other additional revenues for the

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262 Small County Road Assistance Program; providing an  
263 exception from the prohibition against funding  
264 capacity improvements on county roads; amending s.  
265 339.2817, F.S.; revising the criteria that the  
266 Department of Transportation must consider for  
267 evaluating projects for County Incentive Grant Program  
268 assistance; authorizing a county located either wholly  
269 or partially within the Everglades Agricultural Area  
270 to request a specified percent of project costs for  
271 eligible projects; amending s. 339.2818, F.S.;

272 deleting a provision that the funds allocated under  
273 the Small County Outreach Program are in addition to  
274 the Small County Road Assistance Program; deleting a  
275 provision that a local government within the  
276 Everglades Agricultural Area, the Peace River Basin,  
277 or the Suwannee River Basin may compete for additional  
278 funding; conforming provisions to changes made by the  
279 act; making a technical change; amending s. 339.68,  
280 F.S.; providing legislative findings; creating the  
281 Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program within the  
282 Department of Commerce; defining the term "rural  
283 community"; requiring the department to allocate from  
284 the State Transportation Trust Fund a minimum sum in  
285 each fiscal year to fund the program; providing that  
286 such funding is in addition to any other funding  
287 provided to the program; providing criteria the  
288 department must use to prioritize projects for funding  
289 under the program; requiring the department to submit  
290 a report to the Governor and the Legislature by a

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291 specified date; requiring that such report be  
292 submitted every 2 years thereafter; providing the  
293 criteria for such report; requiring the Department of  
294 Transportation to allocate additional funds to  
295 implement the Small County Road Assistance Program and  
296 amend the tentative work program for a specified  
297 number of fiscal years; requiring the department to  
298 submit a budget amendment before the adoption of the  
299 work program; requiring the department to allocate  
300 sufficient funds to implement the Florida Arterial  
301 Road Modernization Program; requiring the department  
302 to amend the current tentative work program for a  
303 specified number of fiscal years to include the  
304 program's projects; requiring the department to submit  
305 a budget amendment before the implementation of the  
306 program; requiring that the revenue increases in the  
307 State Transportation Trust Fund which are derived from  
308 the act be used to fund the work program; amending s.  
309 381.402, F.S.; revising eligibility requirements for  
310 the Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical  
311 Education Program; revising the proof required to make  
312 payments for participation in the program; creating s.  
313 381.403, F.S.; providing legislative findings;  
314 creating the Rural Access to Primary and Preventive  
315 Care Grant Program within the Department of Health for  
316 a specified purpose; defining terms; requiring the  
317 department to award grants under the program to  
318 physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous  
319 advanced practice registered nurses intending to open

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320 new practices or practice locations in qualifying  
321 rural areas; specifying eligibility criteria for the  
322 grants; requiring the department, by a specified date,  
323 to create an application process for applying for  
324 grants under the program; specifying requirements for  
325 the application and application process; authorizing  
326 the department, subject to specific appropriation, to  
327 award grants under the program; specifying limitations  
328 on the awarding of grants; specifying expenses for  
329 which grant funds are authorized and prohibited;  
330 requiring the department to enter into a contract with  
331 each grant recipient; specifying requirements for the  
332 contracts; authorizing the department to adopt rules;  
333 requiring the department, beginning on a specified  
334 date and annually thereafter, to provide a report  
335 containing specified information to the Governor and  
336 the Legislature; providing for future legislative  
337 review and repeal of the program; creating s.  
338 381.9856, F.S.; creating the Stroke, Cardiac, and  
339 Obstetric Response and Education Grant Program within  
340 the Department of Health; specifying the purpose of  
341 the program; defining terms; requiring the department  
342 to award grants under the program to certain entities  
343 meeting specified criteria; requiring the department  
344 to give priority to certain applicants; limiting  
345 individual grants to a specified amount per year;  
346 requiring grant recipients to submit quarterly reports  
347 to the department; requiring the department to monitor  
348 program implementation and outcomes; requiring the

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349 department to submit an annual report to the Governor  
350 and the Legislature by a specified date; authorizing  
351 the department to adopt rules; providing construction;  
352 providing for future legislative review and repeal of  
353 the program; amending s. 395.6061, F.S.; providing  
354 that rural hospital capital grant improvement program  
355 funding may be awarded to rural hospitals to establish  
356 mobile care units and telehealth kiosks for specified  
357 purposes; defining terms; amending s. 420.9073, F.S.;  
358 revising the calculation of guaranteed amounts  
359 distributed from the Local Government Housing Trust  
360 Fund; reenacting and amending s. 420.9075, F.S.;  
361 authorizing a certain percentage of the funds made  
362 available in each county and eligible municipality  
363 from the local housing distribution to be used to  
364 preserve multifamily affordable rental housing;  
365 specifying what such funds may be used for; providing  
366 an expiration; amending s. 1001.451, F.S.; revising  
367 the services required to be provided by regional  
368 consortium service organizations when such services  
369 are found to be necessary and appropriate by such  
370 organizations' boards of directors; revising the  
371 allocation that certain regional consortium service  
372 organizations are eligible to receive from the General  
373 Appropriations Act; requiring each regional consortium  
374 service organization to submit an annual report to the  
375 Department of Education; requiring that unexpended  
376 amounts in certain funds be carried forward; requiring  
377 each regional consortium service organization to

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378 provide quarterly financial reports to member  
379 districts; requiring member districts to designate a  
380 district to serve as a fiscal agent for certain  
381 purposes; providing for compensation of the fiscal  
382 agent district; requiring regional consortium service  
383 organizations to retain all funds received from grants  
384 or contracted services to cover indirect or  
385 administrative costs associated with the provision of  
386 such services; requiring the regional consortium  
387 service organization board of directors to determine  
388 products and services provided by the organization;  
389 requiring a regional consortium service organization  
390 board of directors to recommend the establishment of  
391 positions and appointments to a fiscal agent district;  
392 requiring that personnel be employed under specified  
393 personnel policies; authorizing the regional  
394 consortium service organization board of directors to  
395 recommend a salary schedule for personnel; authorizing  
396 regional consortium service organizations to purchase  
397 or lease property and facilities essential to their  
398 operations; providing for the distribution of revenue  
399 if a regional consortium service organization is  
400 dissolved; deleting a provision requiring applications  
401 for incentive grants; authorizing regional consortium  
402 service organization boards of directors to contract  
403 to provide services to nonmember districts; requiring  
404 that a fund balance be established for specified  
405 purposes; deleting a requirement for the use of  
406 certain funds; authorizing a regional consortium

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407 service organization to administer a specified  
408 program; creating s. 1001.4511, F.S.; creating the  
409 Regional Consortia Service Organization Supplemental  
410 Services Program; providing the purpose of the  
411 program; authorizing funds to be used for specified  
412 purposes; requiring each regional consortium service  
413 organization to report the distribution of funds  
414 annually to the Legislature; providing for the  
415 carryforward of funds; providing appropriations;  
416 creating s. 1009.635, F.S.; establishing the Rural  
417 Incentive for Professional Educators Program within  
418 the Department of Education; requiring the program to  
419 provide financial assistance for the repayment of  
420 student loans to eligible participants who establish  
421 permanent residency and employment in rural  
422 communities; providing that eligible participants may  
423 receive up to a certain amount in total student loan  
424 repayment assistance over a certain timeframe;  
425 requiring the department to verify certain information  
426 of participants in the program before it disburses  
427 awards; providing that the program is administered  
428 through the Office of Student Financial Assistance  
429 within the department; requiring the department to  
430 develop procedures and monitor compliance; requiring  
431 the State Board of Education to adopt rules by a  
432 certain date; amending s. 1013.62, F.S.; revising the  
433 calculation methodology to determine the amount of  
434 revenue that a school district must distribute to each  
435 eligible charter school; amending s. 1013.64, F.S.;

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436 revising conditions under which a school district may  
437 receive funding on an approved construction project;  
438 providing appropriations for specified purposes;  
439 amending ss. 163.3187, 212.205, 257.191, 257.193,  
440 265.283, 288.11621, 288.11631, 443.191, 571.26, and  
441 571.265, F.S.; conforming cross-references and  
442 provisions to changes made by the act; reenacting s.  
443 288.9935(8), F.S., relating to the Microfinance  
444 Guarantee Program, to incorporate the amendment made  
445 to s. 20.60, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting  
446 ss. 125.0104(5)(c), 193.624(3), 196.182(2), 218.12(1),  
447 218.125(1), 218.135(1), 218.136(1), 252.35(2)(cc),  
448 288.102(4), 403.064(16)(g), 589.08(2) and (3), and  
449 1011.62(1)(f), F.S., relating to authorized uses of  
450 tourist development tax; applicability of assessments  
451 of renewable energy source devices; application of  
452 exemptions of renewable energy source devices;  
453 appropriations to offset reductions in ad valorem tax  
454 revenue in fiscally constrained counties; offset for  
455 tax loss associated with certain constitutional  
456 amendments affecting fiscally constrained counties;  
457 offset for tax loss associated with reductions in  
458 value of certain citrus fruit packing and processing  
459 equipment; offset for ad valorem revenue loss  
460 affecting fiscally constrained counties; Division of  
461 Emergency Management powers; one-to-one match  
462 requirement under the Supply Chain Innovation Grant  
463 Program; applicability of provisions related to reuse  
464 of reclaimed water; land acquisition restrictions; and



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465 funds for operation of schools, respectively, to  
466 incorporate the amendment made to s. 218.67, F.S., in  
467 references thereto; reenacting s. 403.0741(6)(c),  
468 F.S., relating to grease waste removal and disposal,  
469 to incorporate the amendments made to ss. 218.67 and  
470 339.2818, F.S., in references thereto; reenacting s.  
471 163.3177(7)(e), F.S., relating to required and  
472 optional elements of comprehensive plans and studies  
473 and surveys, to incorporate the amendment made to s.  
474 288.0656, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s.  
475 288.9962(7)(a), F.S., relating to the Broadband  
476 Opportunity Program, to incorporate the amendment made  
477 to s. 288.9961, F.S., in a reference thereto;  
478 reenacting s. 215.211(1), F.S., relating to service  
479 charges and elimination or reduction for specified  
480 proceeds, to incorporate the amendment made to s.  
481 319.32, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s.  
482 339.66(5) and (6), F.S., relating to upgrades of  
483 arterial highways with controlled access facilities,  
484 to incorporate the amendment made to s. 339.68, F.S.,  
485 in references thereto; reenacting ss. 420.9072(4) and  
486 (6), 420.9076(7)(b), and 420.9079(2), F.S., relating  
487 to the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program,  
488 adoption of affordable housing incentive strategies  
489 and committees, and the Local Government Housing Trust  
490 Fund, respectively, to incorporate the amendment made  
491 to s. 420.9073, F.S., in references thereto; providing  
492 an effective date.  
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494 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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496 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) and paragraph  
497 (c) of subsection (10) of section 20.60, Florida Statutes, are  
498 amended, and paragraph (a) of subsection (5) of that section is  
499 reenacted, to read:

500 20.60 Department of Commerce; creation; powers and duties.-

501 (3) (a) The following divisions and offices of the  
502 Department of Commerce are established:

503 1. The Division of Economic Development.

504 2. The Division of Community Development.

505 3. The Division of Workforce Services.

506 4. The Division of Finance and Administration.

507 5. The Division of Information Technology.

508 6. The Office of the Secretary.

509 7. The Office of Rural Prosperity.

510 8. The Office of Economic Accountability and Transparency,  
511 which shall:

512 a. Oversee the department's critical objectives as  
513 determined by the secretary and make sure that the department's  
514 key objectives are clearly communicated to the public.

515 b. Organize department resources, expertise, data, and  
516 research to focus on and solve the complex economic challenges  
517 facing the state.

518 c. Provide leadership for the department's priority issues  
519 that require integration of policy, management, and critical  
520 objectives from multiple programs and organizations internal and  
521 external to the department; and organize and manage external  
522 communication on such priority issues.

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523 d. Promote and facilitate key department initiatives to  
524 address priority economic issues and explore data and identify  
525 opportunities for innovative approaches to address such economic  
526 issues.

527 e. Promote strategic planning for the department.

528 (5) The divisions within the department have specific  
529 responsibilities to achieve the duties, responsibilities, and  
530 goals of the department. Specifically:

531 (a) The Division of Economic Development shall:

532 1. Analyze and evaluate business prospects identified by  
533 the Governor and the secretary.

534 2. Administer certain tax refund, tax credit, and grant  
535 programs created in law. Notwithstanding any other provision of  
536 law, the department may expend interest earned from the  
537 investment of program funds deposited in the Grants and  
538 Donations Trust Fund to contract for the administration of those  
539 programs, or portions of the programs, assigned to the  
540 department by law, by the appropriations process, or by the  
541 Governor. Such expenditures shall be subject to review under  
542 chapter 216.

543 3. Develop measurement protocols for the state incentive  
544 programs and for the contracted entities which will be used to  
545 determine their performance and competitive value to the state.  
546 Performance measures, benchmarks, and sanctions must be  
547 developed in consultation with the legislative appropriations  
548 committees and the appropriate substantive committees, and are  
549 subject to the review and approval process provided in s.  
550 216.177. The approved performance measures, standards, and  
551 sanctions shall be included and made a part of the strategic

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552 plan for contracts entered into for delivery of programs  
553 authorized by this section.

554 4. Develop a 5-year statewide strategic plan. The strategic  
555 plan must include, but need not be limited to:

556 a. Strategies for the promotion of business formation,  
557 expansion, recruitment, and retention through aggressive  
558 marketing, attraction of venture capital and finance  
559 development, domestic trade, international development, and  
560 export assistance, which lead to more and better jobs and higher  
561 wages for all geographic regions, disadvantaged communities, and  
562 populations of the state, including rural areas, minority  
563 businesses, and urban core areas.

564 b. The development of realistic policies and programs to  
565 further the economic diversity of the state, its regions, and  
566 their associated industrial clusters.

567 c. Specific provisions for the stimulation of economic  
568 development and job creation in rural areas and midsize cities  
569 and counties of the state, including strategies for rural  
570 marketing and the development of infrastructure in rural areas.

571 d. Provisions for the promotion of the successful long-term  
572 economic development of the state with increased emphasis in  
573 market research and information.

574 e. Plans for the generation of foreign investment in the  
575 state which create jobs paying above-average wages and which  
576 result in reverse investment in the state, including programs  
577 that establish viable overseas markets, assist in meeting the  
578 financing requirements of export-ready firms, broaden  
579 opportunities for international joint venture relationships, use  
580 the resources of academic and other institutions, coordinate

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581 trade assistance and facilitation services, and facilitate  
582 availability of and access to education and training programs  
583 that assure requisite skills and competencies necessary to  
584 compete successfully in the global marketplace.

585 f. The identification of business sectors that are of  
586 current or future importance to the state's economy and to the  
587 state's global business image, and development of specific  
588 strategies to promote the development of such sectors.

589 g. Strategies for talent development necessary in the state  
590 to encourage economic development growth, taking into account  
591 factors such as the state's talent supply chain, education and  
592 training opportunities, and available workforce.

593 h. Strategies and plans to support this state's defense,  
594 space, and aerospace industries and the emerging complementary  
595 business activities and industries that support the development  
596 and growth of defense, space, and aerospace in this state.

597 5. Update the strategic plan every 5 years.

598 6. Involve CareerSource Florida, Inc.; direct-support  
599 organizations of the department; local governments; the general  
600 public; local and regional economic development organizations;  
601 other local, state, and federal economic, international, and  
602 workforce development entities; the business community; and  
603 educational institutions to assist with the strategic plan.

604 7. Coordinate with the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing  
605 Corporation in the development of the 4-year marketing plan  
606 pursuant to s. 288.1226(13).

607 8. Administer and manage relationships, as appropriate,  
608 with the entities and programs created pursuant to the Florida  
609 Capital Formation Act, ss. 288.9621-288.96255.

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610 (10) The department shall, by November 1 of each year,  
611 submit an annual report to the Governor, the President of the  
612 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the  
613 condition of the business climate and economic development in  
614 the state.

615 (c) The report must incorporate annual reports of other  
616 programs, including:

617 1. A detailed report of the performance of the Black  
618 Business Loan Program and a cumulative summary of quarterly  
619 report data required under s. 288.714.

620 2. ~~The Rural Economic Development Initiative established~~  
621 ~~under s. 288.0656.~~

622 ~~3.~~ A detailed report of the performance of the Florida  
623 Development Finance Corporation and a summary of the  
624 corporation's report required under s. 288.9610.

625 ~~3.4.~~ Information provided by Space Florida under s.  
626 331.3051 and an analysis of the activities and accomplishments  
627 of Space Florida.

628 Section 2. Subsection (5) is added to section 163.3168,  
629 Florida Statutes, to read:

630 163.3168 Planning innovations and technical assistance.—

631 (5) When selecting applications for funding for technical  
632 assistance, the state land planning agency shall give preference  
633 to local governments located in a rural area of opportunity as  
634 defined in s. 288.0656. The state land planning agency shall  
635 consult with the Office of Rural Prosperity when awarding  
636 funding pursuant to this section.

637 Section 3. Paragraph (i) is added to subsection (4) of  
638 section 201.15, Florida Statutes, to read:

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639           201.15 Distribution of taxes collected.—All taxes collected  
640 under this chapter are hereby pledged and shall be first made  
641 available to make payments when due on bonds issued pursuant to  
642 s. 215.618 or s. 215.619, or any other bonds authorized to be  
643 issued on a parity basis with such bonds. Such pledge and  
644 availability for the payment of these bonds shall have priority  
645 over any requirement for the costs of collection and enforcement  
646 under this section. Before distribution pursuant to this  
647 section, the Department of Revenue shall deduct amounts  
648 necessary to pay the costs of the collection and enforcement of  
649 the tax levied by this chapter. The costs may not be levied  
650 against any portion of taxes pledged to debt service on bonds to  
651 the extent that the costs are required to pay any amounts  
652 relating to the bonds. All of the costs of the collection and  
653 enforcement of the tax levied by this chapter shall be available  
654 and transferred to the extent necessary to pay debt service and  
655 any other amounts payable with respect to bonds authorized  
656 before January 1, 2017, secured by revenues distributed pursuant  
657 to this section. All taxes remaining after deduction of costs  
658 shall be distributed as follows:

659           (4) After the required distributions to the Land  
660 Acquisition Trust Fund pursuant to subsections (1) and (2), the  
661 lesser of 8 percent of the remainder or \$150 million in each  
662 fiscal year shall be paid into the State Treasury to the credit  
663 of the State Housing Trust Fund and shall be expended pursuant  
664 to s. 420.50871. If 8 percent of the remainder is greater than  
665 \$150 million in any fiscal year, the difference between 8  
666 percent of the remainder and \$150 million shall be paid into the  
667 State Treasury to the credit of the General Revenue Fund. The

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668 remainder shall be distributed as follows:

669 (i) A total of \$30 million shall be paid to the credit of  
670 the State Transportation Trust Fund, which funds are exclusively  
671 for the use of the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program  
672 as provided in s. 339.68.

673 Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section  
674 202.18, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

675 202.18 Allocation and disposition of tax proceeds.—The  
676 proceeds of the communications services taxes remitted under  
677 this chapter shall be treated as follows:

678 (2) The proceeds of the taxes remitted under s.  
679 202.12(1)(b) shall be allocated as follows:

680 (c)1. After the distribution required under paragraph (b),  
681 the remainder ~~During each calendar year, the remaining portion~~  
682 ~~of the proceeds shall be transferred to the Local Government~~  
683 ~~Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund. Seventy percent of such~~  
684 ~~proceeds shall be~~ and allocated in the same proportion as the  
685 allocation of total receipts of the half-cent sales tax under s.  
686 218.61 and the emergency distribution under s. 218.65 in the  
687 prior state fiscal year. ~~Thirty percent of such proceeds shall~~  
688 ~~be distributed pursuant to s. 218.67.~~

689 2. The proportion of the proceeds allocated based on the  
690 emergency distribution under s. 218.65 shall be distributed  
691 pursuant to s. 218.65.

692 3. In each calendar year, the proportion of the proceeds  
693 allocated based on the half-cent sales tax under s. 218.61 shall  
694 be allocated to each county in the same proportion as the  
695 county's percentage of total sales tax allocation for the prior  
696 state fiscal year and distributed pursuant to s. 218.62.



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697 4. The department shall distribute the appropriate amount  
698 to each municipality and county each month at the same time that  
699 local communications services taxes are distributed pursuant to  
700 subsection (3).

701 Section 5. Paragraph (d) of subsection (6) of section  
702 212.20, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

703 212.20 Funds collected, disposition; additional powers of  
704 department; operational expense; refund of taxes adjudicated  
705 unconstitutionally collected.—

706 (6) Distribution of all proceeds under this chapter and ss.  
707 202.18(1)(b) and (2)(b) and 203.01(1)(a)3. is as follows:

708 (d) The proceeds of all other taxes and fees imposed  
709 pursuant to this chapter or remitted pursuant to s. 202.18(1)(b)  
710 and (2)(b) shall be distributed as follows:

711 1. In any fiscal year, the greater of \$500 million, minus  
712 an amount equal to 4.6 percent of the proceeds of the taxes  
713 collected pursuant to chapter 201, or 5.2 percent of all other  
714 taxes and fees imposed pursuant to this chapter or remitted  
715 pursuant to s. 202.18(1)(b) and (2)(b) shall be deposited in  
716 monthly installments into the General Revenue Fund.

717 2. After the distribution under subparagraph 1., 8.9744  
718 percent of the amount remitted by a sales tax dealer located  
719 within a participating county pursuant to s. 218.61 shall be  
720 transferred into the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax  
721 Clearing Trust Fund. Beginning July 1, 2003, the amount to be  
722 transferred shall be reduced by 0.1 percent, and the department  
723 shall distribute this amount to the Public Employees Relations  
724 Commission Trust Fund less \$5,000 each month, which shall be  
725 added to the amount calculated in subparagraph 3. and

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726 distributed accordingly.

727         3. After the distribution under subparagraphs 1. and 2.,  
728 0.0966 percent shall be transferred to the Local Government  
729 Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund and distributed pursuant  
730 to s. 218.65.

731         4. After the distributions under subparagraphs 1., 2., and  
732 3., 2.0810 percent of the available proceeds shall be  
733 transferred monthly to the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for  
734 Counties pursuant to s. 218.215.

735         5. After the distributions under subparagraphs 1., 2., and  
736 3., 1.3653 percent of the available proceeds shall be  
737 transferred monthly to the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for  
738 Municipalities pursuant to s. 218.215. If the total revenue to  
739 be distributed pursuant to this subparagraph is at least as  
740 great as the amount due from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for  
741 Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance  
742 Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000, no municipality shall  
743 receive less than the amount due from the Revenue Sharing Trust  
744 Fund for Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial  
745 Assistance Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000. If the  
746 total proceeds to be distributed are less than the amount  
747 received in combination from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for  
748 Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance  
749 Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000, each municipality  
750 shall receive an amount proportionate to the amount it was due  
751 in state fiscal year 1999-2000.

752         6. After the distributions required under subparagraphs 1.-  
753 5., the greater of \$50 million or 0.1438 percent of the  
754 available proceeds shall be transferred in each fiscal year to

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755 fiscally constrained counties pursuant to s. 218.67.

756 7. Of the remaining proceeds:

757 a. In each fiscal year, the sum of \$29,915,500 shall be  
758 divided into as many equal parts as there are counties in the  
759 state, and one part shall be distributed to each county. The  
760 distribution among the several counties must begin each fiscal  
761 year on or before January 5th and continue monthly for a total  
762 of 4 months. If a local or special law required that any moneys  
763 accruing to a county in fiscal year 1999-2000 under the then-  
764 existing provisions of s. 550.135 be paid directly to the  
765 district school board, special district, or a municipal  
766 government, such payment must continue until the local or  
767 special law is amended or repealed. The state covenants with  
768 holders of bonds or other instruments of indebtedness issued by  
769 local governments, special districts, or district school boards  
770 before July 1, 2000, that it is not the intent of this  
771 subparagraph to adversely affect the rights of those holders or  
772 relieve local governments, special districts, or district school  
773 boards of the duty to meet their obligations as a result of  
774 previous pledges or assignments or trusts entered into which  
775 obligated funds received from the distribution to county  
776 governments under then-existing s. 550.135. This distribution  
777 specifically is in lieu of funds distributed under s. 550.135  
778 before July 1, 2000.

779 b. The department shall distribute \$166,667 monthly to each  
780 applicant certified as a facility for a new or retained  
781 professional sports franchise pursuant to s. 288.1162. Up to  
782 \$41,667 shall be distributed monthly by the department to each  
783 certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11621 for a facility

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784 for a spring training franchise. However, not more than \$416,670  
785 may be distributed monthly in the aggregate to all certified  
786 applicants for facilities for spring training franchises.  
787 Distributions begin 60 days after such certification and  
788 continue for not more than 30 years, except as otherwise  
789 provided in s. 288.11621. A certified applicant identified in  
790 this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in distributions than  
791 expended by the applicant for the public purposes provided in s.  
792 288.1162(5) or s. 288.11621(3).

793 c. The department shall distribute up to \$83,333 monthly to  
794 each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a  
795 facility used by a single spring training franchise, or up to  
796 \$166,667 monthly to each certified applicant as defined in s.  
797 288.11631 for a facility used by more than one spring training  
798 franchise. Monthly distributions begin 60 days after such  
799 certification or July 1, 2016, whichever is later, and continue  
800 for not more than 20 years to each certified applicant as  
801 defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by a single spring  
802 training franchise or not more than 25 years to each certified  
803 applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by more  
804 than one spring training franchise. A certified applicant  
805 identified in this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in  
806 distributions than expended by the applicant for the public  
807 purposes provided in s. 288.11631(3).

808 d. The department shall distribute \$15,333 monthly to the  
809 State Transportation Trust Fund.

810 e.(I) On or before July 25, 2021, August 25, 2021, and  
811 September 25, 2021, the department shall distribute \$324,533,334  
812 in each of those months to the Unemployment Compensation Trust

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813 Fund, less an adjustment for refunds issued from the General  
814 Revenue Fund pursuant to s. 443.131(3)(e)3. before making the  
815 distribution. The adjustments made by the department to the  
816 total distributions shall be equal to the total refunds made  
817 pursuant to s. 443.131(3)(e)3. If the amount of refunds to be  
818 subtracted from any single distribution exceeds the  
819 distribution, the department may not make that distribution and  
820 must subtract the remaining balance from the next distribution.

821 (II) Beginning July 2022, and on or before the 25th day of  
822 each month, the department shall distribute \$90 million monthly  
823 to the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.

824 (III) If the ending balance of the Unemployment  
825 Compensation Trust Fund exceeds \$4,071,519,600 on the last day  
826 of any month, as determined from United States Department of the  
827 Treasury data, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research  
828 shall certify to the department that the ending balance of the  
829 trust fund exceeds such amount.

830 (IV) This sub-subparagraph is repealed, and the department  
831 shall end monthly distributions under sub-sub-subparagraph (II),  
832 on the date the department receives certification under sub-sub-  
833 subparagraph (III).

834 f. Beginning July 1, 2023, in each fiscal year, the  
835 department shall distribute \$27.5 million to the Florida  
836 Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust Fund under s. 571.26,  
837 for further distribution in accordance with s. 571.265.

838 ~~8.7.~~ All other proceeds must remain in the General Revenue  
839 Fund.

840 Section 6. Paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section  
841 215.971, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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842 215.971 Agreements funded with federal or state  
843 assistance.—

844 (1) An agency agreement that provides state financial  
845 assistance to a recipient or subrecipient, as those terms are  
846 defined in s. 215.97, or that provides federal financial  
847 assistance to a subrecipient, as defined by applicable United  
848 States Office of Management and Budget circulars, must include  
849 all of the following:

850 (h)1. If the agency agreement provides federal or state  
851 financial assistance to a county or municipality that is a rural  
852 community or rural area of opportunity as those terms are  
853 defined in s. 288.0656(2), a provision allowing the agency to  
854 provide for the payment of invoices to the county, municipality,  
855 or rural area of opportunity as that term is defined in s.  
856 288.0656(2), for verified and eligible performance that has been  
857 completed in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth  
858 in the agreement. This provision is not intended to require  
859 reimbursement to the county, municipality, or rural area of  
860 opportunity for invoices paid, but to allow the agency to  
861 provide for the payment of invoices due. The agency shall  
862 expedite such payment requests in order to facilitate the timely  
863 payment of invoices received by the county, municipality, or  
864 rural area of opportunity. This provision is included to  
865 alleviate the financial hardships that certain rural counties  
866 and municipalities encounter when administering agreements, and  
867 must be exercised by the agency when a county or municipality  
868 demonstrates financial hardship, to the extent that federal or  
869 state law, rule, or other regulation allows such payments. This  
870 paragraph may not be construed to alter or limit any other

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871 provisions of federal or state law, rule, or other regulation.

872 2. By August 1, 2026, and each year thereafter, each state  
873 agency shall report to the Office of Rural Prosperity  
874 summarizing the implementation of this paragraph for the  
875 preceding fiscal year. The Office of Rural Prosperity shall  
876 summarize the information received pursuant to this paragraph in  
877 its annual report as required in s. 288.013.

878 Section 7. Section 218.67, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
879 read:

880 218.67 Distribution for fiscally constrained counties.—

881 (1) Each county ~~that is entirely within a rural area of~~  
882 ~~opportunity as designated by the Governor pursuant to s.~~  
883 ~~288.0656 or each county for which the value of a mill will raise~~  
884 no more than \$10 ~~\$5~~ million in revenue, based on the taxable  
885 value certified pursuant to s. 1011.62(4)(a)1.a., from the  
886 previous July 1, shall be considered a fiscally constrained  
887 county.

888 (2) Each fiscally constrained county government that  
889 participates in the local government half-cent sales tax shall  
890 be eligible to receive an additional distribution ~~from the Local~~  
891 ~~Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund,~~ as provided  
892 in s. 212.20(6)(d)6. ~~s. 202.18(2)(c)1.~~, in addition to its  
893 regular monthly distribution provided under this part and any  
894 emergency or supplemental distribution under s. 218.65.

895 (3) The amount to be distributed to each fiscally  
896 constrained county shall be determined by the Department of  
897 Revenue at the beginning of the fiscal year, using the prior  
898 fiscal year's sales and use tax collections from the most recent  
899 fiscal year that reports 12 months of collections ~~July 1 taxable~~

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900 ~~value certified pursuant to s. 1011.62(4)(a)1.a., tax data,~~  
901 ~~population as defined in s. 218.21, and the most current~~  
902 ~~calendar year per capita personal income published by the Bureau~~  
903 ~~of Economic Analysis of the United States Department of Commerce~~  
904 ~~millage rate levied for the prior fiscal year.~~ The amount  
905 distributed shall be allocated based upon the following factors:

906 (a) The ~~contribution-to-revenue~~ relative revenue-raising-  
907 capacity factor for each participating county shall equal 100  
908 multiplied by a quotient, the numerator of which is the county's  
909 population and the denominator of which is the state sales and  
910 use tax collections attributable to the county ~~be the ability of~~  
911 ~~the eligible county to generate ad valorem revenues from 1 mill~~  
912 ~~of taxation on a per capita basis. A county that raises no more~~  
913 ~~than \$25 per capita from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 1;~~  
914 ~~a county that raises more than \$25 but no more than \$30 per~~  
915 ~~capita from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 0.75; and a~~  
916 ~~county that raises more than \$30 but no more than \$50 per capita~~  
917 ~~from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 0.5. No value shall be~~  
918 ~~assigned to counties that raise more than \$50 per capita from 1~~  
919 ~~mill of ad valorem taxation.~~

920 (b) The personal-income ~~local-effort~~ factor shall equal a  
921 quotient, the numerator of which is the median per capita  
922 personal income of participating counties and the denominator of  
923 which is the county's per capita personal income ~~be a measure of~~  
924 ~~the relative level of local effort of the eligible county as~~  
925 ~~indicated by the millage rate levied for the prior fiscal year.~~  
926 ~~The local-effort factor shall be the most recently adopted~~  
927 ~~countywide operating millage rate for each eligible county~~  
928 ~~multiplied by 0.1.~~



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929 (c) Each eligible county's proportional allocation of the  
930 total amount available to be distributed to all of the eligible  
931 counties shall be in the same proportion as the sum of the  
932 county's two factors is to the sum of the two factors for all  
933 eligible counties. The proportional rate computation must be  
934 carried to the fifth decimal place, and the amount to distribute  
935 to each county must be rounded to the next whole dollar amount.  
936 The counties that are eligible to receive an allocation under  
937 this subsection and the amount available to be distributed to  
938 such counties do ~~shall~~ not include counties participating in the  
939 phaseout period under subsection (4) or the amounts they remain  
940 eligible to receive during the phaseout.

941 (4) For those counties that no longer qualify under the  
942 requirements of subsection (1) after the effective date of this  
943 act, there shall be a 2-year phaseout period. Beginning on July  
944 1 of the year following the year in which the value of a mill  
945 for that county exceeds \$10 ~~\$5~~ million in revenue, the county  
946 shall receive two-thirds of the amount received in the prior  
947 year, and beginning on July 1 of the second year following the  
948 year in which the value of a mill for that county exceeds \$10 ~~\$5~~  
949 million in revenue, the county shall receive one-third of the  
950 amount received in the last year that the county qualified as a  
951 fiscally constrained county. Following the 2-year phaseout  
952 period, the county is ~~shall~~ no longer be eligible to receive any  
953 distributions under this section unless the county can be  
954 considered a fiscally constrained county as provided in  
955 subsection (1).

956 (5) (a) The revenues received under this section must be  
957 allocated ~~may be used~~ by a county to be used for the following

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958 purposes:

959 1. Fifty percent for public safety, including salary  
960 expenditures for law enforcement officers or correctional  
961 officers, as those terms are defined in s. 943.10(1) and (2),  
962 respectively, firefighters as defined in s. 633.102, or  
963 emergency medical technicians or paramedics as those terms are  
964 defined in s. 401.23.

965 2. Thirty percent for infrastructure needs.

966 3. Twenty percent for any public purpose.

967 (b) The revenues received under this section ~~any public~~  
968 ~~purpose, except that such revenues~~ may not be used to pay debt  
969 service on bonds, notes, certificates of participation, or any  
970 other forms of indebtedness.

971 Section 8. Subsection (6) is added to section 288.0001,  
972 Florida Statutes, to read:

973 288.0001 Economic Development Programs Evaluation.—The  
974 Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of  
975 Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA)  
976 shall develop and present to the Governor, the President of the  
977 Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the  
978 chairs of the legislative appropriations committees the Economic  
979 Development Programs Evaluation.

980 (6) (a) The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and  
981 OPPAGA shall prepare a report on the impact of the Florida  
982 Statutes on rural communities. Specifically, the report must  
983 include the following:

984 1. A review of definitions in the Florida Statutes of terms  
985 such as "rural community," "rural area of opportunity," and  
986 other similar terms used to define rural areas of this state,

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987 including population-based references, to assess the adequacy of  
988 the current statutory framework in defining these areas. The  
989 analysis must include, but need not be limited to:

990 a. Evaluation of whether current provisions properly  
991 distinguish these communities or areas from more urban and  
992 suburban parts of this state;

993 b. Consideration of updates to the definitions and  
994 references to classify additional rural areas, such as growing  
995 communities, unincorporated areas, or rural communities by  
996 design; and

997 c. Study of appropriate metrics to be used to describe  
998 rural communities or areas, such as population, geographic,  
999 demographic, or other metrics, or combinations thereof.

1000 2. A survey of local governments meeting the statutory  
1001 definition of "rural community" or "rural area of opportunity"  
1002 to assess the benefits to the local government of being  
1003 identified as such and any perceived unmet needs in the  
1004 implementation of current statutory provisions designed to  
1005 support rural communities or areas.

1006 3. An analysis of state grant programs and recurring  
1007 appropriations that explicitly benefit rural communities or  
1008 areas, including, but not limited to, program purpose, funding  
1009 amounts, participation rates, and consistency with peer-reviewed  
1010 studies on effective economic programs for these areas.

1011 (b) Upon request, the Office of Economic and Demographic  
1012 Research and OPPAGA must be provided with all data necessary to  
1013 complete the report, including any confidential data, by any  
1014 entity with information related to this review. The offices may  
1015 collaborate on all data collection and analysis.

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1016 (c) The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and  
1017 OPPAGA shall submit a report to the President of the Senate and  
1018 the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 31,  
1019 2025. The report must provide recommendations to address any  
1020 findings, including any changes in statutory definitions or  
1021 references to rural communities or areas, opportunities to  
1022 enhance state support to rural communities or areas, outcome  
1023 measures or other criteria that may be used to examine the  
1024 effectiveness of state grant programs for rural communities or  
1025 areas, and adjustments to program design, including changes to  
1026 increase participation in state grant programs for rural  
1027 communities or areas.

1028 (d) This subsection expires July 1, 2026.

1029 Section 9. Present paragraphs (d) and (e) of subsection (7)  
1030 of section 288.001, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as  
1031 paragraphs (e) and (f), respectively, and a new paragraph (d) is  
1032 added to that subsection, to read:

1033 288.001 The Florida Small Business Development Center  
1034 Network.—

1035 (7) ADDITIONAL STATE FUNDS; USES; PAY-PER-PERFORMANCE  
1036 INCENTIVES; STATEWIDE SERVICE; SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS; BEST  
1037 PRACTICES; ELIGIBILITY.—

1038 (d) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), (b), and (c), the  
1039 network shall use funds directly appropriated for the specific  
1040 purpose of expanding service in rural communities, as defined in  
1041 s. 288.0656, in addition to any funds allocated by the network  
1042 from other sources. The network shall use the funds to develop  
1043 an activity plan focused on network consultants and resources in  
1044 rural communities. In collaboration with regional economic

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1045 development organizations as defined in s. 288.018, the plan  
1046 must provide for either full- or part-time consultants to be  
1047 available for at least 20 hours per week in rural areas or be  
1048 permanently stationed in rural areas. This may include  
1049 establishing a circuit in specific rural locations to ensure the  
1050 consultants' availability on a regular basis. By using the funds  
1051 to create a regular presence in rural areas, the network can  
1052 strengthen community collaboration, raise awareness of available  
1053 resources to provide opportunities for new business development  
1054 or existing business growth, and make professional experience,  
1055 education, and business information available in these essential  
1056 communities. The network may dedicate funds to facilitate local  
1057 or regional events that focus on small business topics, provide  
1058 consulting services, and leverage partner organizations, such as  
1059 the regional economic development organizations, local workforce  
1060 development boards as described in s. 445.07, and Florida  
1061 College System institutions.

1062 Section 10. Section 288.007, Florida Statutes, is amended  
1063 to read:

1064 288.007 Inventory of communities seeking to recruit  
1065 businesses.—By September 30 of each year, a county or  
1066 municipality that has a population of at least 25,000 or its  
1067 local economic development organization, and each local  
1068 government within a rural area of opportunity as defined in s.  
1069 288.0656 or its local economic development organization, shall  
1070 ~~must~~ submit to the department a brief overview of the strengths,  
1071 services, and economic development incentives that its community  
1072 offers. The local government or its local economic development  
1073 organization also shall ~~must~~ identify any industries that it is

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1074 encouraging to locate or relocate to its area. Unless otherwise  
1075 required pursuant to this section, a county or municipality  
1076 having a population of 25,000 or less ~~fewer~~ or its local  
1077 economic development organization seeking to recruit businesses  
1078 may submit information as required in this section and may  
1079 participate in any activity or initiative resulting from the  
1080 collection, analysis, and reporting of the information to the  
1081 department pursuant to this section.

1082 Section 11. Section 288.013, Florida Statutes, is created  
1083 to read:

1084 288.013 Office of Rural Prosperity.-

1085 (1) The Legislature finds that the unique characteristics  
1086 and nature of the rural communities in this state are integral  
1087 to making this state an attractive place to visit, work, and  
1088 live. Further, the Legislature finds that building a prosperous  
1089 rural economy and vibrant rural communities is in the best  
1090 interest of this state. Rural prosperity is integral to  
1091 supporting this state's infrastructure, housing, and  
1092 agricultural and food-processing needs, as well as promoting the  
1093 health and advancement of the overall economy of this state. It  
1094 is of importance to the state that its rural areas are able to  
1095 grow, whether locally or in regional partnerships. To better  
1096 serve rural communities, and in recognition of rural Florida's  
1097 unique challenges and opportunities, the Office of Rural  
1098 Prosperity is established to ensure these efforts are  
1099 coordinated, focused, and effective.

1100 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity is created within the  
1101 Department of Commerce for the purpose of supporting rural  
1102 communities by helping rural stakeholders navigate available

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1103 programs and resources and representing rural interests across  
1104 state government.

1105 (3) The Governor shall appoint a director to lead the  
1106 office, subject to confirmation by the Senate. The director  
1107 shall report to the secretary of the department and shall serve  
1108 at the pleasure of the secretary.

1109 (4) The office shall do all of the following:

1110 (a) Serve as the state's point of contact for rural local  
1111 governments.

1112 (b) Administer the Rural Economic Development Initiative  
1113 (REDI) pursuant to s. 288.0656.

1114 (c) Provide training and technical assistance to rural  
1115 local governments on a broad range of community and economic  
1116 development activities. The training and technical assistance  
1117 may be offered using communications technology or in person and  
1118 must be recorded and posted to the office's website. The  
1119 training and technical assistance must include, at a minimum,  
1120 the following topics:

1121 1. How to access state and federal resources, including  
1122 training on the online rural resource directory required under  
1123 paragraph (d).

1124 2. Best practices relating to comprehensive planning,  
1125 economic development, and land development in rural communities.

1126 3. Strategies to address management and administrative  
1127 capacity challenges unique to rural local governments.

1128 4. Requirements of, and updates on recent changes to, the  
1129 Community Planning Act under s. 163.3161.

1130 5. Updates on other recent state and federal laws affecting  
1131 rural local governments.

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1132 (d) Create and maintain an online rural resource directory  
1133 to serve as an interactive tool to navigate the various state  
1134 and federal resources, tools, and services available to rural  
1135 local governments. The office shall regularly maintain the  
1136 resource directory and, to the greatest extent possible, include  
1137 up-to-date information on state and federal programs, resources,  
1138 tools, and services that address the needs of rural communities  
1139 in all areas of governance. Each state agency shall routinely  
1140 provide information and updates to the office for maintenance of  
1141 the resource directory. The resource directory must allow users  
1142 to search by indicators, such as agency name, resource type, or  
1143 topic, and include a notification function to allow users to  
1144 receive alerts when new or modified resources are available. To  
1145 the greatest extent possible, the resource directory must  
1146 include information on financial match requirements for the  
1147 state and federal programs listed in the directory.

1148 (5) (a) By October 1, 2025, the office shall establish and  
1149 staff seven regional rural community liaison centers across this  
1150 state for the purpose of providing specialized in-person state  
1151 support to local governments in rural areas of opportunity as  
1152 defined in s. 288.0656. The department shall by rule divide this  
1153 state into seven regions and assign a regional rural community  
1154 liaison center to each region. Each liaison center shall support  
1155 the local governments within its geographic territory and shall  
1156 be staffed with at least two full-time department personnel. At  
1157 a minimum, liaison centers shall have the following powers,  
1158 duties, and functions:

1159 1. Work with local governments to plan and achieve goals  
1160 for local or regional growth, economic development, and rural



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1161 prosperity.

1162 2. Facilitate local government access to state and federal  
1163 resources, such as grants, loans, and other aid or resources.

1164 3. Advise local governments on available waivers of program  
1165 requirements, including financial match waivers or reductions,  
1166 for projects using state or federal funds through the Rural  
1167 Economic Development Initiative under s. 288.0656.

1168 4. Coordinate local government technical assistance needs  
1169 with the department and other state or federal agencies.

1170 5. Promote model ordinances, policies, and strategies  
1171 related to economic development.

1172 6. Assist local governments with regulatory and reporting  
1173 compliance.

1174 (b) To the greatest extent possible, the regional rural  
1175 community liaison centers shall coordinate with local and  
1176 regional governmental entities, regional economic development  
1177 organizations as defined in s. 288.018, and other appropriate  
1178 entities to establish a network to foster community-driven  
1179 solutions that promote viable and sustainable rural communities.

1180 (c) The regional rural community liaison centers shall  
1181 regularly engage with the Rural Economic Development Initiative  
1182 established in s. 288.0656, and at least one staff member from  
1183 each liaison center shall attend, either in person or by means  
1184 of electronic communication, the monthly meetings required by s.  
1185 288.0656(6)(c).

1186 (6) By December 1, 2025, and each year thereafter, the  
1187 director of the office shall submit to the Administration  
1188 Commission in the Executive Office of the Governor a written  
1189 report describing the office's operations and accomplishments

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1190 for the preceding year, inclusive of the Rural Economic  
1191 Development Initiative report required by s. 288.0656(8). In  
1192 consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer  
1193 Services, the office shall also include in the annual report  
1194 recommendations for policies, programs, and funding to further  
1195 support the needs of rural communities in this state. The office  
1196 shall submit the annual report to the President of the Senate  
1197 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of  
1198 each year and publish the annual report on the office's website.  
1199 The director shall present, in person at the next scheduled  
1200 Administration Commission meeting, detailed information from the  
1201 annual report required by this subsection.

1202 (7) (a) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government  
1203 Accountability (OPPAGA) shall review the effectiveness of the  
1204 office by December 15, 2026, and each year thereafter until  
1205 2028. Beginning in 2029, OPPAGA shall review and evaluate the  
1206 office every 3 years and shall submit a report based on its  
1207 findings. Each report must recommend policy and statutory  
1208 modifications for consideration by the Legislature. OPPAGA shall  
1209 submit each report to the President of the Senate and the  
1210 Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to the  
1211 schedule.

1212 (b) OPPAGA shall review strategies implemented by other  
1213 states on rural community preservation, enhancement, and  
1214 revitalization and report on their effectiveness and potential  
1215 for implementation in this state. OPPAGA shall include its  
1216 findings in its report to the President of the Senate and the  
1217 Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2027,  
1218 and every 3 years thereafter.

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1219 (c)1. OPPAGA shall review each state-funded or state-  
1220 administered grant and loan program available to local  
1221 governments to:

1222 a. Identify any specified local government financial match  
1223 requirements and whether any portion of a match may be waived or  
1224 is required to be waived, pursuant to law, and programs where a  
1225 financial match waiver may be appropriate for rural local  
1226 government applicants, if not contemplated by law.

1227 b. Identify grant and loan application evaluation criteria,  
1228 including scoring procedures, for programs that may be perceived  
1229 to be overly burdensome for rural local government applicants,  
1230 and whether special accommodations or preferences for rural  
1231 local governments may be appropriate.

1232 2. OPPAGA shall produce a report based on its review and  
1233 submit the report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker  
1234 of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2026.

1235 3. This paragraph expires June 30, 2027.

1236 Section 12. Section 288.014, Florida Statutes, is created  
1237 to read:

1238 288.014 Renaissance Grants Program.—

1239 (1) The Legislature finds that it has traditionally  
1240 provided programs to assist rural communities with economic  
1241 development and enhance their ability to attract businesses and  
1242 that, by providing that extra component of economic viability,  
1243 rural communities are able to attract new businesses and grow  
1244 existing ones. However, the Legislature finds that a subset of  
1245 rural communities has decreased in population over the past  
1246 decade, contributing to a decline in local business activity and  
1247 economic development. The Legislature further finds that the

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1248 state must transform its assistance to these specific rural  
1249 communities to help them achieve a necessary precursor of  
1250 economic viability. The Legislature further finds that the  
1251 approach intended by the creation of renaissance grants is to  
1252 focus on reversing the economic deterioration in rural  
1253 communities by retaining and attracting residents by giving them  
1254 a reason to stay, which is the impetus of natural economic  
1255 growth, business opportunities, and increased quality of life.

1256 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity within the department  
1257 shall administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block  
1258 grants to eligible counties. By October 1, 2025, the Office of  
1259 Economic and Demographic Research shall certify to the Office of  
1260 Rural Prosperity which counties are growth-impeded. For the  
1261 purposes of this section, "growth-impeded" means a county that,  
1262 as of the most recent population estimate, has had a declining  
1263 population over the last 10 years. After an initial  
1264 certification, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research  
1265 shall annually certify whether the county remains growth-  
1266 impeded, until the county has 3 consecutive years of population  
1267 growth. Upon such certification of population growth, the county  
1268 is eligible to participate in the program for 1 additional year  
1269 in order for the county to prepare for the end of block grant  
1270 funding.

1271 (3) (a) Each participating county shall enter into an  
1272 agreement with the Office of Rural Prosperity to receive the  
1273 block grant. Each county has broad authority to design its  
1274 specific plan to achieve population growth within the broad  
1275 parameters identified in this section. The Office of Rural  
1276 Prosperity may not determine the manner in which the county

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1277 implements the block grant. However, regional rural community  
1278 liaison center staff shall provide assistance in developing the  
1279 county's plan, upon request.

1280 (b) Each participating county shall report annually to the  
1281 Office of Rural Prosperity on activities undertaken,  
1282 intergovernmental agreements entered into, and other information  
1283 as required by the office.

1284 (c) Each participating county shall receive \$1 million from  
1285 the funds appropriated to the program. Counties participating in  
1286 the program shall make all attempts to limit expenses for  
1287 administrative costs, consistent with the need for prudent  
1288 management and accountability in the use of public funds. Each  
1289 county may contribute other funds for block grant purposes,  
1290 including local, state, or federal grant funds, or seek out in-  
1291 kind or financial contributions from private or public sources  
1292 to assist in fulfilling the activities undertaken.

1293 (4) (a) A participating county shall hire and retain a  
1294 renaissance coordinator and may use block grant funds for this  
1295 purpose. The renaissance coordinator is responsible for:

1296 1. Ensuring that block grant funds are used as provided in  
1297 this section;

1298 2. Coordinating with other local governments, school  
1299 boards, Florida College System institutions, or other entities;  
1300 and

1301 3. Reporting as necessary to the state, including  
1302 information necessary pursuant to subsection (7).

1303 (b) The Office of Rural Prosperity regional rural community  
1304 liaison center staff shall provide assistance, upon request, and  
1305 training to the renaissance coordinator to ensure successful

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1306 implementation of the block grant.

1307 (5) A participating county shall design a plan to make  
1308 targeted investments in the community to achieve population  
1309 growth and increase the economic vitality of the community. The  
1310 plan must include the following key features for use of the  
1311 state support:

1312 (a) Technology centers with extended hours located within  
1313 schools or on school premises, administered by the local school  
1314 board, for such schools which provide extended hours and support  
1315 for access by students.

1316 (b) Facilities that colocate adult day care with child care  
1317 facilities. The site-sharing facilities must be managed to also  
1318 provide opportunities for direct interaction between generations  
1319 and increase the health and well-being of both younger and older  
1320 participants, reduce social isolation, and create cost and time  
1321 efficiencies for working family members. The regional rural  
1322 community liaison center staff of the Office of Rural Prosperity  
1323 shall assist the county, upon request, with bringing to the  
1324 Rural Economic Development Initiative or directly to the  
1325 appropriate state agency recommendations necessary to streamline  
1326 any required state permits, licenses, regulations, or other  
1327 requirements.

1328 (c) Technology labs managed in agreement with the nearest  
1329 Florida College System institution or a career center as  
1330 established under s. 1001.44. Repurposing vacant industrial  
1331 sites or existing office space must be given priority in the  
1332 selection of lab locations. Each local technology lab must be  
1333 staffed and open for extended hours with the capacity to  
1334 provide:

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1335 1. Access to trainers and equipment necessary for users to  
1336 earn various certificates or online degrees in technology;

1337 2. Hands-on assistance with applying for appropriate remote  
1338 work opportunities; and

1339 3. Studio space with equipment for graduates and other  
1340 qualifying residents to perform remote work that is based on the  
1341 use of technology. Collaboration with community partners,  
1342 including the local workforce development board as described in  
1343 s. 445.007, to provide training opportunities, in-kind support  
1344 such as transportation to and from the lab, financing of  
1345 equipment for in-home use, or basic maintenance of such  
1346 equipment is required.

1347 (6) In addition to the hiring of a renaissance coordinator,  
1348 a participating county shall develop intergovernmental  
1349 agreements for shared responsibilities with its municipalities,  
1350 school board, and Florida College System institution or career  
1351 center and enter into necessary contracts with providers and  
1352 community partners in order to implement the plan.

1353 (7) (a) Every 2 years, the Auditor General shall conduct an  
1354 operational audit as defined in s. 11.45 of each county's grant  
1355 activities, beginning in 2026.

1356 (b) On December 31, 2026, and every year thereafter, the  
1357 Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall submit an  
1358 annual report of renaissance block grant recipients by county to  
1359 the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of  
1360 Representatives. The report must provide key economic indicators  
1361 that measure progress in altering longer-term trends in the  
1362 county. The Office of Rural Prosperity shall provide the Office  
1363 of Economic and Demographic Research with information as

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1364 requested to complete the report.

1365 (8) Notwithstanding s. 216.301, funds appropriated for the  
1366 purposes of this section are not subject to reversion.

1367 (9) This section expires June 30, 2040.

1368 Section 13. Section 288.0175, Florida Statutes, is created  
1369 to read:

1370 288.0175 Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant  
1371 Program.—

1372 (1) The Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant  
1373 Program is established within the Office of Rural Prosperity  
1374 within the department to fund and support the development of  
1375 public infrastructure smart technology projects in communities  
1376 located in rural areas of opportunity, subject to legislative  
1377 appropriation.

1378 (2) As used in this section, the term:

1379 (a) "Public infrastructure smart technology" means systems  
1380 and applications that use connectivity, data analytics, and  
1381 automation to improve public infrastructure by increasing  
1382 efficiency, enhancing public services, and promoting sustainable  
1383 development.

1384 (b) "Rural area of opportunity" has the same meaning as in  
1385 s. 288.0656.

1386 (c) "Smart technology lead organization" means a not-for-  
1387 profit corporation organized under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal  
1388 Revenue Code which has been in existence for at least 3 years  
1389 and specializes in smart region planning.

1390 (3) (a) The Office of Rural Prosperity shall contract with  
1391 one or more smart technology lead organizations to administer  
1392 the grant program for the purpose of deploying public



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1393 infrastructure smart technology in rural communities. In  
1394 accordance with the terms required by the office, the smart  
1395 technology lead organization shall provide grants to counties  
1396 and municipalities located within a rural area of opportunity  
1397 for public infrastructure smart technology projects.

1398 (b) The office's contract with a smart technology lead  
1399 organization must specify the contract deliverables, including  
1400 financial reports and other reports due the office, timeframes  
1401 for achieving contractual obligations, and any other  
1402 requirements the office determines are necessary. The contract  
1403 must require the smart technology lead organization to do the  
1404 following:

1405 1. Collaborate with counties and municipalities located in  
1406 rural areas of opportunity to identify opportunities for local  
1407 governments to institute cost-effective smart technology  
1408 solutions for improving public services and infrastructure.

1409 2. Provide technical assistance to counties and  
1410 municipalities located in rural areas of opportunity in  
1411 developing plans for public infrastructure smart technology  
1412 projects.

1413 3. Assist counties and municipalities located in rural  
1414 areas of opportunity in connecting with other communities,  
1415 companies, and other entities to leverage the impact of each  
1416 public infrastructure smart technology project.

1417 (4) The office shall include in its annual report required  
1418 by s. 288.013(6) a description of the projects funded under this  
1419 section.

1420 Section 14. Subsections (1), (2), and (4) of section  
1421 288.018, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

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1422 288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

1423 (1)(a) For the purposes of this section, the term “regional  
1424 economic development organization” means an economic development  
1425 organization located in or contracted to serve a rural area of  
1426 opportunity, as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(2)(d)~~.

1427 (b) Subject to appropriation, the Office of Rural  
1428 Prosperity ~~department~~ shall establish a grant program to provide  
1429 funding to regional economic development organizations for the  
1430 purpose of building the professional capacity of those  
1431 organizations. Building the professional capacity of a regional  
1432 economic development organization includes hiring professional  
1433 staff to develop, deliver, and provide needed economic  
1434 development professional services, including technical  
1435 assistance, education and leadership development, marketing, and  
1436 project recruitment. Grants may also be used by a regional  
1437 economic development organization to provide technical  
1438 assistance to local governments, local economic development  
1439 organizations, and existing and prospective businesses.

1440 (c) A regional economic development organization may apply  
1441 annually to the office ~~department~~ for a grant. The office  
1442 ~~department~~ is authorized to approve, on an annual basis, grants  
1443 to such regional economic development organizations. The office  
1444 may award a maximum amount of \$50,000 in a year to ~~maximum~~  
1445 ~~amount~~ an organization ~~may receive in any year will be~~ \$50,000,  
1446 or \$250,000 each to ~~for~~ any three regional economic development  
1447 organizations that serve an entire region of a rural area of  
1448 opportunity designated pursuant to s. 288.0656(7) if they are  
1449 recognized by the office ~~department~~ as serving such a region.

1450 (2) In approving the participants, the office ~~department~~

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1451 shall require the following:

1452 (a) Documentation of official commitments of support from  
1453 each of the units of local government represented by the  
1454 regional organization.

1455 (b) Demonstration that the organization is in existence and  
1456 actively involved in economic development activities serving the  
1457 region.

1458 (c) Demonstration of the manner in which the organization  
1459 is or will coordinate its efforts with those of other local and  
1460 state organizations.

1461 (4) Except as otherwise provided in the General  
1462 Appropriations Act, the office department may expend up to  
1463 \$750,000 each fiscal year from funds appropriated ~~to the Rural~~  
1464 ~~Community Development Revolving Loan Fund~~ for the purposes  
1465 outlined in this section.

1466 Section 15. Section 288.019, Florida Statutes, is amended  
1467 to read:

1468 288.019 Rural considerations in grant review and evaluation  
1469 processes; financial match waiver or reduction.-

1470 (1) Notwithstanding any other law, and to the fullest  
1471 extent possible, each agency and organization ~~the member~~  
1472 ~~agencies and organizations~~ of the Rural Economic Development  
1473 Initiative (REDI) as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(6)(a)~~  
1474 shall review:

1475 (a) All grant and loan application evaluation criteria and  
1476 scoring procedures to ensure the fullest access for rural  
1477 communities ~~counties~~ as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(2)~~ to  
1478 resources available throughout the state; and

1479 (b) The financial match requirements for projects in rural

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1480 communities.

1481 ~~(2)(1)~~ Each REDI agency and organization shall consider the  
1482 impact on and ability of rural communities to meet and be  
1483 competitive under such criteria, scoring, and requirements. Upon  
1484 review, each REDI agency and organization shall ~~review all~~  
1485 evaluation and scoring procedures and develop a proposal for  
1486 modifications to those procedures which minimize the financial  
1487 and resource impact to a rural community, including waiver or  
1488 reduction of any required financial match requirements ~~impact of~~  
1489 a project within a rural area.

1490 ~~(a)(2)~~ Evaluation criteria and scoring procedures must  
1491 provide for an appropriate ranking, when ranking is a component  
1492 of the program, based on the proportionate impact that projects  
1493 have on a rural area when compared with similar project impacts  
1494 on an urban area. Additionally,

1495 ~~(3)~~ evaluation criteria and scoring procedures must  
1496 recognize the disparity of available fiscal resources for an  
1497 equal level of financial support from an urban county or  
1498 municipality and a rural county or municipality.

1499 ~~(a)~~ The evaluation criteria should weight contribution in  
1500 proportion to the amount of funding available at the local  
1501 level.

1502 ~~(b)~~ Match requirements must be waived or reduced for rural  
1503 communities. When appropriate, an in-kind match must ~~should~~ be  
1504 allowed and applied as a financial match when a rural community  
1505 county is experiencing economic financial distress as defined in  
1506 s. 288.0656 through elevated unemployment at a rate in excess of  
1507 the state's average by 5 percentage points or because of the  
1508 loss of its ad valorem base. Donations of land, though usually

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1509 not recognized as an in-kind match, may be treated as such. As  
1510 appropriate, each agency and organization that applies for or  
1511 receives federal funding must request federal approval to waive  
1512 or reduce the financial match requirements, if any, for projects  
1513 in rural communities.

1514 ~~(3)(4) For existing programs, The proposal modified~~  
1515 ~~evaluation criteria and scoring procedure must be submitted~~  
1516 ~~delivered to the Office of Rural Prosperity department for~~  
1517 ~~distribution to the REDI agencies and organizations. The REDI~~  
1518 ~~agencies and organizations shall review and make comments and~~  
1519 ~~recommendations that. Future rules, programs, evaluation~~  
1520 ~~criteria, and scoring processes must be brought before a REDI~~  
1521 ~~meeting for review, discussion, and recommendation to allow~~  
1522 ~~rural communities counties fuller access to the state's~~  
1523 ~~resources.~~

1524 (4) Each REDI agency and organization shall ensure that  
1525 related administrative rules or policies are modified, as  
1526 necessary, to reflect the finalized proposal and that  
1527 information about the authorized waiver or reduction is included  
1528 in the online rural resource directory of the Office of Rural  
1529 Prosperity required in s. 288.013(4)(d).

1530 (5) The rural liaison from the related regional district  
1531 shall assist the rural community to make requests of waiver or  
1532 reduction of match.

1533 Section 16. Subsection (3) is added to section 288.021,  
1534 Florida Statutes, to read:

1535 288.021 Economic development liaison.—

1536 (3) When practicable, the staff member appointed as the  
1537 economic development liaison shall also serve as the agency

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1538 representative for the Rural Economic Development Initiative  
1539 pursuant to s. 288.0656.

1540 Section 17. Section 288.065, Florida Statutes, is amended  
1541 to read:

1542 288.065 Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund.—

1543 (1) The Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund  
1544 Program is established within the Office of Rural Prosperity  
1545 ~~department~~ to facilitate the use of existing federal, state, and  
1546 local financial resources by providing local governments with  
1547 financial assistance to further promote the economic viability  
1548 of rural communities. These funds may be used to finance  
1549 initiatives directed toward maintaining or developing the  
1550 economic base of rural communities, especially initiatives  
1551 addressing employment opportunities for residents of these  
1552 communities.

1553 (2) (a) The program shall provide for long-term loans, loan  
1554 guarantees, and loan loss reserves to units of local  
1555 governments, or economic development organizations substantially  
1556 underwritten by a unit of local government.7

1557 (b) For purposes of this section, the term "unit of local  
1558 government" means:

1559 1. A county ~~within counties~~ with a population ~~populations~~  
1560 of 75,000 or less. ~~fewer, or within any~~

1561 2. A county with a population of 125,000 or less ~~fewer~~  
1562 which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or  
1563 less. ~~fewer~~

1564 3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph  
1565 1. or subparagraph 2.

1566 4. A county or municipality within a rural area of

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1567 opportunity.

1568

1569 For purposes of this paragraph, population is determined in  
1570 accordance with the most recent official estimates pursuant to  
1571 s. 186.901 and must include those residing in incorporated and  
1572 unincorporated areas of a county, ~~based on the most recent~~  
1573 ~~official population estimate as determined under s. 186.901,~~  
1574 ~~including those residing in incorporated areas and those~~  
1575 ~~residing in unincorporated areas of the county, or to units of~~  
1576 ~~local government, or economic development organizations~~  
1577 ~~substantially underwritten by a unit of local government, within~~  
1578 ~~a rural area of opportunity.~~

1579 ~~(c)(b)~~ Requests for loans must ~~shall~~ be made by application  
1580 to the office department. Loans must ~~shall~~ be made pursuant to  
1581 agreements specifying the terms and conditions agreed to between  
1582 the applicant and the office department. The loans are ~~shall be~~  
1583 the legal obligations of the applicant.

1584 ~~(d)(e)~~ All repayments of principal and interest shall be  
1585 returned to the loan fund and made available for loans to other  
1586 applicants. However, in a rural area of opportunity designated  
1587 under s. 288.0656 ~~by the Governor~~, and upon approval by the  
1588 office department, repayments of principal and interest may be  
1589 retained by the applicant if such repayments are dedicated and  
1590 matched to fund regionally based economic development  
1591 organizations representing the rural area of opportunity.

1592 (3) The office department shall manage the fund,  
1593 establishing loan practices that must include, but are not  
1594 limited to, procedures for establishing loan interest rates,  
1595 uses of funding, application procedures, and application review

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1596 procedures. The office has ~~department shall have~~ final approval  
1597 authority for any loan under this section.

1598 (4) Notwithstanding ~~the provisions of~~ s. 216.301, funds  
1599 appropriated for this loan fund may ~~purpose shall~~ not be subject  
1600 to reversion.

1601 (5) The office shall include in its annual report required  
1602 under s. 288.013 detailed information about the fund, including  
1603 loans made during the previous fiscal year, loans active, loans  
1604 terminated or repaid, and the amount of funds not obligated as  
1605 of 14 days before the date the report is due.

1606 Section 18. Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of section  
1607 288.0655, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (6) is  
1608 added to that section, to read:

1609 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

1610 (1) There is created within the Office of Rural Prosperity  
1611 ~~department~~ the Rural Infrastructure Fund to facilitate the  
1612 planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in  
1613 rural communities which will encourage job creation, capital  
1614 investment, and the strengthening and diversification of rural  
1615 economies by promoting tourism, trade, and economic development.  
1616 Grants under this program may be awarded to a unit of local  
1617 government within a rural community or rural area of opportunity  
1618 as defined in s. 288.0656; or to a regional economic development  
1619 organization, a unit of local government, or an economic  
1620 development organization substantially underwritten by a unit of  
1621 local government for an infrastructure project located within an  
1622 unincorporated area that has a population of 15,000 or less, has  
1623 been in existence for 100 year or more, is contiguous to a rural  
1624 community, and has been adversely affected by a natural disaster



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1625 or presents a unique economic development opportunity of  
1626 regional impact.

1627 (2) (a) Funds appropriated by the Legislature shall be  
1628 distributed by the office ~~department~~ through grant programs that  
1629 maximize the use of federal, local, and private resources,  
1630 including, but not limited to, those available under the Small  
1631 Cities Community Development Block Grant Program.

1632 (b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural  
1633 areas of opportunity as defined by the Rural Economic  
1634 Development Initiative to infrastructure funding programs of the  
1635 Federal Government, such as those offered by the United States  
1636 Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of  
1637 Commerce, and state programs, including those offered by Rural  
1638 Economic Development Initiative agencies, and to facilitate  
1639 local government or private infrastructure funding efforts, the  
1640 office ~~department~~ may award grants for up to 75 percent of the  
1641 total infrastructure project cost, or up to 100 percent of the  
1642 total infrastructure project cost for a project located in a  
1643 rural community as defined in s. 288.0656(2) which is also  
1644 located in a fiscally constrained county as defined in s.  
1645 218.67(1) or a rural area of opportunity as defined in s.  
1646 288.0656(2). Eligible uses of funds may include improving any  
1647 inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action  
1648 that prohibits economic or community growth and reducing the  
1649 costs to community users of proposed infrastructure improvements  
1650 that exceed such costs in comparable communities. Eligible uses  
1651 of funds include improvements to public infrastructure for  
1652 industrial or commercial sites and upgrades to or development of  
1653 public tourism infrastructure. Authorized infrastructure may

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1654 include the following public or public-private partnership  
1655 facilities: storm water systems; telecommunications facilities;  
1656 roads or other remedies to transportation impediments; nature-  
1657 based tourism facilities; or other physical requirements  
1658 necessary to facilitate tourism, trade, and economic development  
1659 activities in the community. Authorized infrastructure may also  
1660 include publicly or privately owned self-powered nature-based  
1661 tourism facilities, publicly owned telecommunications  
1662 facilities, and additions to the distribution facilities of the  
1663 existing natural gas utility as defined in s. 366.04(3)(c), the  
1664 existing electric utility as defined in s. 366.02, or the  
1665 existing water or wastewater utility as defined in s.  
1666 367.021(12), or any other existing water or wastewater facility,  
1667 which owns a gas or electric distribution system or a water or  
1668 wastewater system in this state when:

1669 1. A contribution-in-aid of construction is required to  
1670 serve public or public-private partnership facilities under the  
1671 tariffs of any natural gas, electric, water, or wastewater  
1672 utility as defined herein; and

1673 2. Such utilities as defined herein are willing and able to  
1674 provide such service.

1675 (c) The office department ~~department~~ may award grants of up to  
1676 \$300,000 for infrastructure feasibility studies, design and  
1677 engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and  
1678 preparation or site readiness activities. Site readiness  
1679 expenses may include clearing title, surveys, permitting,  
1680 environmental studies, and regulatory compliance costs. Grants  
1681 awarded under this paragraph may be used in conjunction with  
1682 grants awarded under paragraph (b). In evaluating applications

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1683 under this paragraph, the office ~~department~~ shall consider the  
1684 extent to which the application seeks to minimize administrative  
1685 and consultant expenses.

1686 (d) The office ~~department~~ shall participate in a memorandum  
1687 of agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture  
1688 under which state funds available through the Rural  
1689 Infrastructure Fund may be advanced, in excess of the prescribed  
1690 state share, for a project that has received from the United  
1691 States Department of Agriculture a preliminary determination of  
1692 eligibility for federal financial support. State funds in excess  
1693 of the prescribed state share which are advanced pursuant to  
1694 this paragraph and the memorandum of agreement shall be  
1695 reimbursed when funds are awarded under an application for  
1696 federal funding.

1697 (e) To enable local governments to access the resources  
1698 available pursuant to s. 403.973(17), the office ~~department~~ may  
1699 award grants for surveys, feasibility studies, and other  
1700 activities related to the identification and preclearance review  
1701 of land which is suitable for preclearance review. Authorized  
1702 grants under this paragraph may not exceed \$75,000 each, except  
1703 in the case of a project in a rural area of opportunity, in  
1704 which case the grant may not exceed \$300,000. Any funds awarded  
1705 under this paragraph must be matched at a level of 50 percent  
1706 with local funds, except that any funds awarded for a project in  
1707 a rural area of opportunity do not require a match of local  
1708 funds. ~~If an application for funding is for a catalyst site, as  
1709 defined in s. 288.0656, the requirement for local match may be  
1710 waived pursuant to the process in s. 288.06561.~~ In evaluating  
1711 applications under this paragraph, the office ~~department~~ shall

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1712 consider the extent to which the application seeks to minimize  
1713 administrative and consultant expenses.

1714 (3) The office ~~department~~, in consultation with the  
1715 Department of Transportation ~~Florida Tourism Industry Marketing~~  
1716 ~~Corporation~~, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the  
1717 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, as  
1718 appropriate, shall review and certify applications pursuant to  
1719 s. 288.061. The review must include an evaluation of the  
1720 economic benefit and long-term viability. The office has  
1721 ~~department shall have~~ final approval for any grant under this  
1722 section.

1723 (6) The office shall include in its annual report required  
1724 under s. 288.013 detailed information about the fund, including  
1725 grants made for the year, grants active, grants terminated or  
1726 complete, and the amount of funds not obligated as of 14 days  
1727 before the date the report is due.

1728 Section 19. Subsection (1), paragraphs (a), (b), and (e) of  
1729 subsection (2), subsections (3) and (6), paragraphs (b) and (c)  
1730 of subsection (7), and subsection (8) of section 288.0656,  
1731 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1732 288.0656 Rural Economic Development Initiative.—

1733 (1) (a) Recognizing that rural communities and regions  
1734 continue to face extraordinary challenges in their efforts to  
1735 significantly improve their economies, specifically in terms of  
1736 personal income, job creation, average wages, and strong tax  
1737 bases, it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage and  
1738 facilitate the location and expansion of major economic  
1739 development projects of significant scale in such rural  
1740 communities. The Legislature finds that rural communities are

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1741 the essential conduits for the economy's distribution,  
1742 manufacturing, and food supply.

1743 (b) The Rural Economic Development Initiative, known as  
1744 "REDI," is created within the Office of Rural Prosperity  
1745 ~~department,~~ and all the participation of state and regional  
1746 agencies listed in paragraph (6) (a) shall participate in this  
1747 ~~initiative is authorized.~~

1748 (2) As used in this section, the term:

1749 ~~(a) "Catalyst project" means a business locating or~~  
1750 ~~expanding in a rural area of opportunity to serve as an economic~~  
1751 ~~generator of regional significance for the growth of a regional~~  
1752 ~~target industry cluster. The project must provide capital~~  
1753 ~~investment on a scale significant enough to affect the entire~~  
1754 ~~region and result in the development of high wage and high skill~~  
1755 ~~jobs.~~

1756 ~~(b) "Catalyst site" means a parcel or parcels of land~~  
1757 ~~within a rural area of opportunity that has been prioritized as~~  
1758 ~~a geographic site for economic development through partnerships~~  
1759 ~~with state, regional, and local organizations. The site must be~~  
1760 ~~reviewed by REDI and approved by the department for the purposes~~  
1761 ~~of locating a catalyst project.~~

1762 ~~(c)(e)~~ "Rural community" means:

- 1763 1. A county with a population of 75,000 or less ~~fewer~~.
- 1764 2. A county with a population of 125,000 or less ~~fewer~~  
1765 which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or  
1766 less ~~fewer~~.
- 1767 3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph  
1768 1. or subparagraph 2.
- 1769 4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an

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1770 incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or less  
1771 ~~fewer~~ and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural  
1772 or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as  
1773 rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress  
1774 factors identified in paragraph (a) ~~paragraph (e)~~ and verified  
1775 by the office ~~department~~.

1776

1777 For purposes of this paragraph, population shall be determined  
1778 in accordance with the most recent official estimate pursuant to  
1779 s. 186.901.

1780 (3) REDI shall be responsible for coordinating and focusing  
1781 the efforts and resources of state and regional agencies on the  
1782 problems which affect the fiscal, economic, and community  
1783 viability of Florida's ~~economically distressed~~ rural  
1784 communities, working with local governments, community-based  
1785 organizations, and private organizations that have an interest  
1786 in the growth and development of these communities to find ways  
1787 to balance environmental and growth management issues with local  
1788 needs.

1789 (6) (a) By August 1 of each year, the head of each of the  
1790 following agencies and organizations shall designate a deputy  
1791 secretary or higher-level staff person from within the agency or  
1792 organization to serve as the REDI representative for the agency  
1793 or organization:

- 1794 1. The Department of Transportation.
- 1795 2. The Department of Environmental Protection.
- 1796 3. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- 1797 4. The Department of State.
- 1798 5. The Department of Health.

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- 1799 6. The Department of Children and Families.  
 1800 7. The Department of Corrections.  
 1801 8. The Department of Education.  
 1802 9. The Department of Juvenile Justice.  
 1803 10. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.  
 1804 11. Each water management district.  
 1805 12. CareerSource Florida, Inc.  
 1806 13. VISIT Florida.  
 1807 14. The Florida Regional Planning Council Association.  
 1808 15. The Agency for Health Care Administration.  
 1809 16. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

1810 (b) An alternate for each designee must ~~shall~~ also be  
 1811 chosen, who must also be a deputy secretary or higher-level  
 1812 staff person, and the names of the designees and alternates must  
 1813 shall be reported sent to the director of the Office of Rural  
 1814 Prosperity. At least one rural liaison from each regional rural  
 1815 community liaison center must participate in the REDI meetings  
 1816 Secretary of Commerce.

1817 (c) REDI shall meet at least each month, but may meet more  
 1818 often as necessary. Each REDI representative, or his or her  
 1819 designee, shall be physically present or available by means of  
 1820 electronic communication for each meeting.

1821 (d) ~~(b)~~ Each REDI representative must have comprehensive  
 1822 knowledge of his or her agency's functions, both regulatory and  
 1823 service in nature, and of the state's economic goals, policies,  
 1824 and programs. This person shall be the primary point of contact  
 1825 for his or her agency with REDI on issues and projects relating  
 1826 to ~~economically distressed~~ rural communities and with regard to  
 1827 expediting project review, shall ensure a prompt effective

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1828 response to problems arising with regard to rural issues, and  
1829 shall work closely with the other REDI representatives in the  
1830 identification of opportunities for preferential awards of  
1831 program funds, contractual or other agreement provisions which  
1832 meet the requirements of s. 215.971, and allowances and waiver  
1833 of program requirements when necessary to encourage and  
1834 facilitate ~~long-term private~~ capital investment and job  
1835 creation.

1836 (e)~~(d)~~ The REDI representatives shall work with REDI in the  
1837 review and evaluation of statutes and rules for adverse impact  
1838 on rural communities and the development of alternative  
1839 proposals to mitigate that impact.

1840 (f)~~(d)~~ Each REDI representative shall be responsible for  
1841 ensuring that each district office or facility of his or her  
1842 agency is informed quarterly about the Rural Economic  
1843 Development Initiative and for providing assistance throughout  
1844 the agency in the implementation of REDI activities.

1845 (7)

1846 (b) Designation as a rural area of opportunity under this  
1847 subsection shall be contingent upon the execution of a  
1848 memorandum of agreement among the office ~~department~~; the  
1849 governing body of the county; and the governing bodies of any  
1850 municipalities to be included within a rural area of  
1851 opportunity. Such agreement shall specify the terms and  
1852 conditions of the designation, including, but not limited to,  
1853 the duties and responsibilities of the county and any  
1854 participating municipalities to take actions designed to  
1855 facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses in  
1856 the area, as well as the recruitment of new businesses to the



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1857 area.

1858 ~~(c) Each rural area of opportunity may designate catalyst~~  
1859 ~~projects, provided that each catalyst project is specifically~~  
1860 ~~recommended by REDI and confirmed as a catalyst project by the~~  
1861 ~~department. All state agencies and departments shall use all~~  
1862 ~~available tools and resources to the extent permissible by law~~  
1863 ~~to promote the creation and development of each catalyst project~~  
1864 ~~and the development of catalyst sites.~~

1865 (8) REDI shall submit a report to the Office of Rural  
1866 Prosperity ~~department~~ on all REDI activities for the previous  
1867 fiscal year as a supplement to the office's ~~department's~~ annual  
1868 report required under s. 288.013 ~~s. 20.60~~. This supplementary  
1869 report must include:

1870 (a) A status report on every project ~~all projects~~ currently  
1871 being coordinated through REDI, the number of preferential  
1872 awards and allowances made pursuant to this section in detail by  
1873 award, allowance, or match type, the dollar amount of such  
1874 awards, and the names of the recipients.

1875 (b) A description of all waivers of program requirements  
1876 granted, including a list by program of each waiver that was  
1877 granted. If waivers were requested but were not granted, a list  
1878 of ungranted waivers, including reasons why the waivers were not  
1879 granted, must be included.

1880 (c) Detailed information as to the economic impact of the  
1881 projects coordinated by REDI.

1882 (d) Recommendations based on the review and evaluation of  
1883 statutes and rules having an adverse impact on rural communities  
1884 and proposals to mitigate such adverse impacts.

1885 (e) Legislative recommendations for statutory waivers or

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1886 reductions of specified economic development program  
1887 requirements, including financial match waivers or reductions,  
1888 for applicants within rural areas of opportunity.

1889 (f) Outcomes of proposals submitted pursuant to s. 288.019.  
1890 Section 20. Section 288.06561, Florida Statutes, is  
1891 repealed.

1892 Section 21. Subsections (2), (3), and (4) of section  
1893 288.0657, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1894 288.0657 Florida rural economic development strategy  
1895 grants.-

1896 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity shall provide ~~department~~  
1897 ~~may accept and administer moneys appropriated to the department~~  
1898 ~~for providing grants to assist rural communities to develop and~~  
1899 ~~implement strategic economic development plans. Grants may be~~  
1900 provided to assist with costs associated with marketing a site  
1901 to business and site selectors for an economic development  
1902 project that is part of an economic development plan, either as  
1903 part of funding to develop and implement a plan or related to an  
1904 already adopted plan.

1905 (3) A rural community, an economic development organization  
1906 in a rural area, or a regional organization representing at  
1907 least one rural community or such economic development  
1908 organizations may apply for such grants. The rural liaison for  
1909 the rural community shall assist those applying for such grants.

1910 (4) The office ~~department~~ shall establish criteria for  
1911 reviewing grant applications. These criteria must ~~shall~~ include,  
1912 but are not limited to, the degree of participation and  
1913 commitment by the local community and the application's  
1914 consistency with local comprehensive plans or the application's

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1915 proposal to ensure such consistency. Grants for marketing may  
 1916 include funding for advertising campaign materials and costs  
 1917 associated with meetings, trade missions, and professional  
 1918 development affiliated with site preparation and marketing. The  
 1919 office department shall review each application for a grant. ~~The~~  
 1920 ~~department may approve grants only to the extent that funds are~~  
 1921 ~~appropriated for such grants by the Legislature.~~

1922 Section 22. Paragraph (a) of subsection (13) of section  
 1923 288.1226, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1924 288.1226 Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation;  
 1925 use of property; board of directors; duties; audit.—

1926 (13) FOUR-YEAR MARKETING PLAN.—

1927 (a) The corporation shall, in collaboration with the  
 1928 department, develop a 4-year marketing plan. At a minimum, the  
 1929 marketing plan must discuss the following:

- 1930 1. Continuation of overall tourism growth in this state.
- 1931 2. Expansion to new or under-represented tourist markets.
- 1932 3. Maintenance of traditional and loyal tourist markets.
- 1933 4. Coordination of efforts with county destination  
 1934 marketing organizations, other local government marketing  
 1935 groups, privately owned attractions and destinations, and other  
 1936 private sector partners to create a seamless, four-season  
 1937 advertising campaign for the state and its regions.
- 1938 5. Development of innovative techniques or promotions to  
 1939 build repeat visitation by targeted segments of the tourist  
 1940 population.
- 1941 6. Consideration of innovative sources of state funding for  
 1942 tourism marketing.
- 1943 7. Promotion of nature-based tourism, including, but not

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1944 limited to, promotion of the Florida Greenways and Trails System  
1945 as described under s. 260.014 and the Florida Shared-Use  
1946 Nonmotorized Trail Network as described under s. 339.81.

1947 8. Coordination of efforts with the Office of Greenways and  
1948 Trails of the Department of Environmental Protection and the  
1949 department to promote and assist local communities, including,  
1950 but not limited to, communities designated as trail towns by the  
1951 Office of Greenways and Trails, to maximize use of nearby trails  
1952 as economic assets, including specific promotion of trail-based  
1953 tourism.

1954 9. Promotion of heritage tourism.

1955 10. Development of a component to address emergency  
1956 response to natural and manmade disasters from a marketing  
1957 standpoint.

1958 11. Provision of appropriate marketing assistance resources  
1959 to small, rural, and agritourism businesses located in this  
1960 state. Such resources may include, but are not limited to,  
1961 marketing plans, marketing assistance, promotional support,  
1962 media development, technical expertise, marketing advice,  
1963 technology training, and social marketing support.

1964 Section 23. Section 288.12266, Florida Statutes, is  
1965 repealed.

1966 Section 24. Paragraph (f) of subsection (2) and paragraphs  
1967 (a), (b), and (c) of subsection (4) of section 288.9961, Florida  
1968 Statutes, are amended, and subsections (6) and (7) are added to  
1969 that section, to read:

1970 288.9961 Promotion of broadband adoption; Florida Office of  
1971 Broadband.—

1972 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

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1973 (f) "Underserved" means a geographic area of this state in  
1974 which there is no provider of broadband Internet service that  
1975 offers a connection to the Internet with a capacity for  
1976 transmission at a consistent speed of at least 100 megabits per  
1977 second downstream and at least 20 ~~10~~ megabits per second  
1978 upstream.

1979 (4) FLORIDA OFFICE OF BROADBAND.—The Florida Office of  
1980 Broadband is created within the Division of Community  
1981 Development in the department for the purpose of developing,  
1982 marketing, and promoting broadband Internet services in this  
1983 state. The office, in the performance of its duties, shall do  
1984 all of the following:

1985 (a) Create a strategic plan that has goals and strategies  
1986 for increasing and improving the availability of, access to, and  
1987 use of broadband Internet service in this state. In development  
1988 of the plan, the department shall incorporate applicable federal  
1989 broadband activities, including any efforts or initiatives of  
1990 the Federal Communications Commission, to improve broadband  
1991 Internet service in this state. The plan must identify available  
1992 federal funding sources for the expansion or improvement of  
1993 broadband. The strategic plan must be submitted to the Governor,  
1994 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
1995 Representatives by June 30, 2022. The strategic plan must be  
1996 updated biennially thereafter. The plan must include a process  
1997 to review and verify public input regarding transmission speeds  
1998 and availability of broadband Internet service throughout this  
1999 state. The office shall consult with each regional rural  
2000 community liaison center within the Office of Rural Prosperity  
2001 on the development and update of the plan.

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2002 (b) Build and facilitate local technology planning teams or  
2003 partnerships with members representing cross-sections of the  
2004 community, which may include, but are not limited to,  
2005 representatives from the following organizations and industries:  
2006 libraries, K-12 education, colleges and universities, local  
2007 health care providers, private businesses, community  
2008 organizations, economic development organizations, local  
2009 governments, tourism, parks and recreation, and agriculture. The  
2010 local technology planning teams or partnerships shall work with  
2011 rural communities to help the communities understand their  
2012 current broadband availability, locate unserved and underserved  
2013 businesses and residents, identify assets relevant to broadband  
2014 deployment, build partnerships with broadband service providers,  
2015 and identify opportunities to leverage assets and reduce  
2016 barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet services in the  
2017 community. The teams or partnerships must be proactive in rural  
2018 communities as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~fiscally constrained~~  
2019 ~~counties~~ in identifying and providing assistance, in  
2020 coordination with the regional rural community liaison centers  
2021 within the Office of Rural Prosperity, with applying for federal  
2022 grants for broadband Internet service.

2023 (c) Provide technical and planning assistance to rural  
2024 communities in coordination with the regional rural community  
2025 liaison centers within the Office of Rural Prosperity.

2026 (6) The office shall submit to the Governor, the President  
2027 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a  
2028 quarterly report detailing the implementation of broadband  
2029 activities in rural, unserved, and underserved communities. Such  
2030 information must be listed by county and include the amount of

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2031 state and federal funds allocated and expended in the county by  
 2032 program; the progress toward deploying broadband in the county;  
 2033 any technical assistance provided; the activities of the local  
 2034 technology planning teams and partnerships; and the fulfillment  
 2035 of any other duties of the office required by this part.

2036 (7) By December 31 each year, the office shall submit to  
 2037 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of  
 2038 the House of Representatives an annual report on the office's  
 2039 operations and accomplishments for that calendar year and the  
 2040 status of broadband Internet service access and use in this  
 2041 state. The report must also incorporate the quarterly reports on  
 2042 rural, unserved, and underserved communities required by  
 2043 subsection (6).

2044 Section 25. Section 290.06561, Florida Statutes, is  
 2045 repealed.

2046 Section 26. Paragraph (a) of subsection (5) of section  
 2047 319.32, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

2048 319.32 Fees; service charges; disposition.—

2049 (5) (a) Forty-seven dollars of each fee collected, except  
 2050 for fees charged on a certificate of title for a motor vehicle  
 2051 for hire registered under s. 320.08(6), for each applicable  
 2052 original certificate of title and each applicable duplicate copy  
 2053 of a certificate of title shall be deposited as follows: ~~into~~  
 2054 ~~the State Transportation Trust Fund. Deposits to the State~~  
 2055 ~~Transportation Trust Fund pursuant to this paragraph may not~~  
 2056 ~~exceed \$200 million in any fiscal year, and from any collections~~  
 2057 ~~in excess of that amount during the fiscal year,~~

2058 1. The first \$30 million collected shall be deposited into  
 2059 the Highway Safety Operating Trust Fund; and

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2060       2. Any remaining collections shall be paid into the State  
2061 Transportation Trust General Revenue Fund.

2062       Section 27. Subsection (37) is added to section 334.044,  
2063 Florida Statutes, to read:

2064       334.044 Powers and duties of the department.—The department  
2065 shall have the following general powers and duties:

2066       (37) To provide technical assistance and support from the  
2067 appropriate district of the department to counties that are not  
2068 located in a metropolitan planning organization created pursuant  
2069 to s. 339.175.

2070       Section 28. Section 339.0801, Florida Statutes, is amended  
2071 to read:

2072       339.0801 Allocation of increased revenues derived from  
2073 amendments to s. 319.32(5) (a) ~~by ch. 2012-128.~~—

2074       (1) The first \$200 million of funds that result from  
2075 increased revenues to the State Transportation Trust Fund  
2076 derived from the amendments to s. 319.32(5) (a) made by s. 11,  
2077 chapter 2012-128, Laws of Florida, ~~this act~~ must be used  
2078 annually, first as set forth in paragraph (a) subsection (1) and  
2079 then as set forth in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) subsections  
2080 ~~(2)–(4)~~, notwithstanding any other provision of law:

2081       (a) 1. (1) (a) Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and  
2082 annually for 30 years thereafter, \$10 million shall be for the  
2083 purpose of funding any seaport project identified in the adopted  
2084 work program of the Department of Transportation, to be known as  
2085 the Seaport Investment Program.

2086       2. (b) The revenues may be assigned, pledged, or set aside  
2087 as a trust for the payment of principal or interest on revenue  
2088 bonds, or other forms of indebtedness issued by an individual



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2089 port or appropriate local government having jurisdiction  
2090 thereof, or collectively by interlocal agreement among any of  
2091 the ports, or used to purchase credit support to permit such  
2092 borrowings. Alternatively, revenue bonds shall be issued by the  
2093 Division of Bond Finance at the request of the Department of  
2094 Transportation under the State Bond Act and shall be secured by  
2095 such revenues as are provided in this subsection.

2096 3.~~(e)~~ Revenue bonds or other indebtedness issued hereunder  
2097 are not a general obligation of the state and are secured solely  
2098 by a first lien on the revenues distributed under this  
2099 subsection.

2100 4.~~(d)~~ The state covenants with holders of the revenue bonds  
2101 or other instruments of indebtedness issued pursuant to this  
2102 subsection that it will not repeal this subsection; nor take any  
2103 other action, including but not limited to amending this  
2104 subsection, that will materially and adversely affect the rights  
2105 of such holders so long as revenue bonds or other indebtedness  
2106 authorized by this subsection are outstanding.

2107 5.~~(e)~~ The proceeds of any revenue bonds or other  
2108 indebtedness, after payment of costs of issuance and  
2109 establishment of any required reserves, shall be invested in  
2110 projects approved by the Department of Transportation and  
2111 included in the department's adopted work program, by amendment  
2112 if necessary. As required under s. 11(f), Art. VII of the State  
2113 Constitution, the Legislature approves projects included in the  
2114 department's adopted work program, including any projects added  
2115 to the work program by amendment under s. 339.135(7).

2116 6.~~(f)~~ Any revenues that are not used for the payment of  
2117 bonds as authorized by this subsection may be used for purposes

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2118 authorized under the Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic  
2119 Development Program. This revenue source is in addition to any  
2120 amounts provided for and appropriated in accordance with ss.  
2121 311.07 and 320.20(3) and (4).

2122 (b)~~(2)~~ Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and annually  
2123 thereafter, \$10 million shall be transferred to the  
2124 Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund, to be used as specified  
2125 in s. 427.0159.

2126 (c)~~(3)~~ Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and annually  
2127 thereafter, \$10 million shall be allocated to the Small County  
2128 Outreach Program to be used as specified in s. 339.2818. These  
2129 funds are in addition to the funds provided for the program  
2130 pursuant to s. 201.15(4)(a)2.

2131 (d)~~(4)~~ After the distributions required pursuant to  
2132 paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) subsections (1)-(3), the remaining  
2133 funds shall be used annually for transportation projects within  
2134 this state for existing or planned strategic transportation  
2135 projects which connect major markets within this state or  
2136 between this state and other states, which focus on job  
2137 creation, and which increase this state's viability in the  
2138 national and global markets.

2139 (2) The remaining funds that result from increased revenue  
2140 to the State Transportation Trust Fund derived pursuant to s.  
2141 319.32(5)(a) must be used annually, notwithstanding any other  
2142 law, beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year and annually  
2143 thereafter, for the Small County Road Assistance Program as  
2144 prescribed in s. 339.2816.

2145 (3)~~(5)~~ Pursuant to s. 339.135(7), the department shall  
2146 amend the work program to add the projects provided for in this

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2147 section.

2148 Section 29. Subsection (3) and paragraph (a) of subsection  
2149 (4) of section 339.2816, Florida Statutes, are amended, and  
2150 paragraph (c) of subsection (4) of that section is reenacted, to  
2151 read:

2152 339.2816 Small County Road Assistance Program.—

2153 (3) Beginning with fiscal year ~~1999-2000 until fiscal year~~  
2154 ~~2009-2010, and beginning again with fiscal year 2012-2013, up to~~  
2155 \$25 million annually from the State Transportation Trust Fund  
2156 must may be used for the purposes of funding the Small County  
2157 Road Assistance Program as described in this section. In  
2158 addition, beginning with fiscal year 2025-2026, the department  
2159 must use the additional revenues allocated by s. 339.0801 for  
2160 the Small County Road Assistance Program.

2161 (4) (a) Small counties shall be eligible to compete for  
2162 funds that have been designated for the Small County Road  
2163 Assistance Program for resurfacing or reconstruction projects on  
2164 county roads that were part of the county road system on June  
2165 10, 1995. Capacity improvements on county roads are shall not be  
2166 eligible for funding under the program unless a safety issue  
2167 exists or the department finds it necessary to widen existing  
2168 lanes as part of a resurfacing or reconstruction project.

2169 (c) The following criteria must be used to prioritize road  
2170 projects for funding under the program:

2171 1. The primary criterion is the physical condition of the  
2172 road as measured by the department.

2173 2. As secondary criteria the department may consider:

2174 a. Whether a road is used as an evacuation route.

2175 b. Whether a road has high levels of agricultural travel.

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2176 c. Whether a road is considered a major arterial route.

2177 d. Whether a road is considered a feeder road.

2178 e. Whether a road is located in a fiscally constrained  
2179 county, as defined in s. 218.67(1).

2180 f. Other criteria related to the impact of a project on the  
2181 public road system or on the state or local economy as  
2182 determined by the department.

2183 Section 30. Subsection (3) of section 339.2817, Florida  
2184 Statutes, is amended, and a new subsection (6) is added to that  
2185 section, to read:

2186 339.2817 County Incentive Grant Program.—

2187 (3) The department must consider, but is not limited to,  
2188 the following criteria for evaluation of projects for County  
2189 Incentive Grant Program assistance:

2190 (a) The extent to which the project will encourage,  
2191 enhance, or create economic benefits;

2192 (b) The likelihood that assistance would enable the project  
2193 to proceed at an earlier date than the project could otherwise  
2194 proceed;

2195 (c) The extent to which assistance would foster innovative  
2196 public-private partnerships and attract private debt or equity  
2197 investment;

2198 (d) The extent to which the project uses new technologies,  
2199 including intelligent transportation systems, which enhance the  
2200 efficiency of the project;

2201 (e) The extent to which the project enhances connectivity  
2202 between rural agricultural areas and market distribution  
2203 centers;

2204 (f) ~~(e)~~ The extent to which the project helps to maintain or

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2205 protect the environment; and

2206 (g)~~(f)~~ The extent to which the project includes  
2207 transportation benefits for improving intermodalism and safety.

2208 (6) A county located either wholly or partially within the  
2209 Everglades Agricultural Area as defined in s. 373.4592(15) may,  
2210 notwithstanding subsection (4), request 100 percent of project  
2211 costs for eligible projects that meet the criteria established  
2212 in paragraph (3) (e).

2213 Section 31. Subsections (1), (2), (3), (6), (7), and (8) of  
2214 section 339.2818, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

2215 339.2818 Small County Outreach Program.—

2216 (1) There is created within the department ~~of~~  
2217 ~~Transportation~~ the Small County Outreach Program. The purpose of  
2218 this program is to assist small county governments in repairing  
2219 or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads,  
2220 addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or  
2221 reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety  
2222 improvements to county roads.

2223 (2) For the purposes of this section, the term "small  
2224 county" means any county that has a population of 200,000 or  
2225 less as determined by the most recent official population census  
2226 determination estimate pursuant to s. 186.901.

2227 ~~(3) Funds allocated under this program, pursuant to s. 4,~~  
2228 ~~ch. 2000-257, Laws of Florida, are in addition to any funds~~  
2229 ~~provided pursuant to s. 339.2816, for the Small County Road~~  
2230 ~~Assistance Program.~~

2231 (5)~~(6)~~ Funds paid into the State Transportation Trust Fund  
2232 pursuant to ss. 201.15, 320.072, and 339.0801 ~~s. 201.15~~ for the  
2233 purposes of the Small County Outreach Program are hereby

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2234 annually appropriated for expenditure to support the Small  
2235 County Outreach Program.

2236 (6)~~(7)~~ Subject to a specific appropriation in addition to  
2237 funds annually appropriated for projects under this section, a  
2238 municipality within a rural area of opportunity or a rural area  
2239 of opportunity community designated under s. 288.0656(7)(a) may  
2240 compete for the additional project funding using the criteria  
2241 listed in subsection (3)~~(4)~~ at up to 100 percent of project  
2242 costs, excluding capacity improvement projects.

2243 ~~(8) Subject to a specific appropriation in addition to~~  
2244 ~~funds appropriated for projects under this section, a local~~  
2245 ~~government either wholly or partially within the Everglades~~  
2246 ~~Agricultural Area as defined in s. 373.4592(15), the Peace River~~  
2247 ~~Basin, or the Suwannee River Basin may compete for additional~~  
2248 ~~funding using the criteria listed in paragraph (4)(c) at up to~~  
2249 ~~100 percent of project costs on state or county roads used~~  
2250 ~~primarily as farm to market connections between rural~~  
2251 ~~agricultural areas and market distribution centers, excluding~~  
2252 ~~capacity improvement projects.~~

2253 Section 32. Section 339.68, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
2254 read:

2255 (Substantial rewording of section.

2256 See s. 339.68, F.S., for present text.)

2257 339.68 Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program.—

2258 (1) The Legislature finds that increasing demands continue  
2259 to be placed on rural arterial roads in this state by a fast-  
2260 growing economy, continued population growth, and increased  
2261 tourism. Investment in the rural arterial roads of this state is  
2262 needed to maintain the safety, mobility, reliability, and

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2263 resiliency of the transportation system in order to support the  
2264 movement of people, goods, and commodities; to enhance economic  
2265 prosperity and competitiveness; and to enrich the quality of  
2266 life of the rural communities and the environment of this state.

2267 (2) The Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program is  
2268 created within the department to make capacity and safety  
2269 improvements to two-lane arterial roads located in rural  
2270 communities. For purposes of this section, the term "rural  
2271 community" has the same meaning as provided in s. 288.0656.

2272 (3) Beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the department  
2273 shall allocate from the State Transportation Trust Fund a  
2274 minimum of \$50 million in each fiscal year for purposes of  
2275 funding the program. This funding is in addition to any other  
2276 funding provided to the program by any other law.

2277 (4) The department shall use the following criteria to  
2278 prioritize projects for funding under the program:

2279 (a) Whether the road has documented safety concerns or  
2280 requires additional safety and design improvements. This may be  
2281 evidenced by the number of fatalities or crashes per vehicle  
2282 mile traveled.

2283 (b) Whether the road has or is projected to have a  
2284 significant amount of truck tractor traffic as determined by the  
2285 department. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "truck  
2286 tractor" has the same meaning as in s. 320.01(11).

2287 (c) Whether the road is used to transport agricultural  
2288 products and commodities from the farm to the market or other  
2289 sale or distribution point.

2290 (d) Whether the road is used to transport goods to or from  
2291 warehouses, distribution centers, or intermodal logistics

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2292 centers as defined in s. 311.101(2).

2293 (e) Whether the road is used as an evacuation route.

2294 (f) Whether the physical condition of the road meets  
2295 department standards.

2296 (g) Whether the road currently has, or is projected to have  
2297 within the next 5 years, a level of service of D, E, or F.

2298 (h) Any other criteria related to the impact of a project  
2299 on the public road system or on the state or local economy as  
2300 determined by the department.

2301 (5) By January 1, 2027, and every 2 years thereafter, the  
2302 department shall submit to the Governor, the President of the  
2303 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report  
2304 regarding the use and condition of arterial roads located in  
2305 rural communities, which report must include the following:

2306 (a) A map of roads located in rural communities which are  
2307 designated as arterial roads.

2308 (b) A needs assessment that must include, but is not  
2309 limited to, consideration of infrastructure improvements to  
2310 improve capacity on arterial roads in rural communities.

2311 (c) A synopsis of the department's project prioritization  
2312 process.

2313 (d) An estimate of the local and state economic impact of  
2314 improving capacity on arterial roads in rural communities.

2315 (e) A listing of the arterial roads and the associated  
2316 improvements to be included in the program and a schedule or  
2317 timeline for the inclusion of such projects in the work program.

2318 Section 33. (1) The Department of Transportation shall  
2319 allocate the additional funds provided by this act to implement  
2320 the Small County Road Assistance Program as created by s.



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2321 339.2816, Florida Statutes, and amend the current tentative work  
2322 program for the 2025-2026 through 2031-2032 fiscal years to  
2323 include additional projects. In addition, before adoption of the  
2324 work program, the department shall submit a budget amendment  
2325 pursuant to s. 339.135(7), Florida Statutes, requesting budget  
2326 authority necessary to implement the additional projects.

2327 (2) The department shall allocate sufficient funds to  
2328 implement the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program,  
2329 develop a plan to expend the revenues as specified in s. 339.68,  
2330 Florida Statutes, and, before its adoption, amend the current  
2331 tentative work program for the 2025-2026 through 2031-2032  
2332 fiscal years to include the program's projects. In addition,  
2333 before adoption of the work program, the department shall submit  
2334 a budget amendment pursuant to s. 339.135(7), Florida Statutes,  
2335 requesting budget authority necessary to implement the program  
2336 as specified in s. 339.68, Florida Statutes.

2337 (3) Notwithstanding any other law, the increase in revenue  
2338 to the State Transportation Trust Fund derived from the  
2339 amendments to ss. 201.15 and 319.32, Florida Statutes, made by  
2340 this act and deposited into the trust fund pursuant to ss.  
2341 201.15 and 339.0801, Florida Statutes, shall be used by the  
2342 department to fund the programs as specified in this section.

2343 Section 34. Paragraph (h) is added to subsection (2) of  
2344 section 381.402, Florida Statutes, and paragraph (b) of  
2345 subsection (3) of that section is amended, to read:

2346 381.402 Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical  
2347 Education Program.—

2348 (2) The following licensed or certified health care  
2349 practitioners are eligible to participate in the program:

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2350       (h) Medical doctors or doctors of osteopathic medicine who  
2351 are board certified in emergency medicine and employed by or  
2352 under contract with a rural hospital as defined in s.  
2353 395.602(2)(b) or a rural emergency hospital as defined in s.  
2354 395.607(1)(a) to provide medical care in the rural hospital's or  
2355 rural emergency hospital's emergency department.

2356

2357 Primary care medical specialties for physicians include  
2358 obstetrics, gynecology, general and family practice, geriatrics,  
2359 internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, and other specialties  
2360 which may be identified by the Department of Health.

2361       (3) From the funds available, the Department of Health  
2362 shall make payments as follows:

2363       (b) All payments are contingent on continued proof of:

2364       1.a. Primary care practice in a rural hospital as defined  
2365 in s. 395.602(2)(b) or an underserved area designated by the  
2366 Department of Health, provided the practitioner accepts Medicaid  
2367 reimbursement if eligible for such reimbursement; ~~or~~

2368       b. Emergency medicine practice in a rural hospital as  
2369 defined in s. 395.602(2)(b) or rural emergency hospital as  
2370 defined in s. 395.607(1)(a), provided the practitioner accepts  
2371 Medicaid reimbursement if eligible for such reimbursement; or

2372       ~~c.~~ For practitioners other than physicians, practice in  
2373 other settings, including, but not limited to, a nursing home  
2374 facility as defined in s. 400.021, a home health agency as  
2375 defined in s. 400.462, or an intermediate care facility for the  
2376 developmentally disabled as defined in s. 400.960. Any such  
2377 setting must be located in, or serve residents or patients in,  
2378 an underserved area designated by the Department of Health and

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2379 must provide services to Medicaid patients.

2380 2. Providing 25 hours annually of volunteer ~~primary care~~  
2381 services within the practitioner's scope of practice in a free  
2382 clinic as specified in s. 766.1115(3)(d)14. or through another  
2383 volunteer program operated ~~by the state~~ pursuant to part IV of  
2384 chapter 110 and approved by the department. In order to meet the  
2385 requirements of this subparagraph, the volunteer hours must be  
2386 verifiable in a manner determined by the department.

2387 Section 35. Section 381.403, Florida Statutes, is created  
2388 to read:

2389 381.403 Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant  
2390 Program.—The Legislature recognizes that access to primary and  
2391 preventive health care is critical for the well-being of the  
2392 residents of this state. The Legislature also recognizes that  
2393 many rural areas of this state have significantly fewer  
2394 available physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous  
2395 advanced practice registered nurses who serve those areas. To  
2396 increase the availability of health care in such underserved  
2397 rural areas, there is created the Rural Access to Primary and  
2398 Preventive Care Grant Program within the Department of Health to  
2399 use grants to incentivize the creation or expansion of health  
2400 care practices in those areas.

2401 (1) As used in this section, the term:

2402 (a) "Autonomous advanced practice registered nurse" means  
2403 an advanced practice registered nurse who is registered under s.  
2404 464.0123 to engage in autonomous practice.

2405 (b) "Majority ownership" means ownership of more than 50  
2406 percent of the interests in a private practice.

2407 (c) "Physician" means a physician licensed under chapter

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2408 458 or chapter 459.

2409 (d) "Physician assistant" means a physician assistant  
2410 licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459 to perform medical  
2411 services delegated by a supervising physician.

2412 (e) "Preventive care" means routine health care services  
2413 designed to prevent illness. The term includes, but is not  
2414 limited to, general physical examinations provided on an annual  
2415 basis, screenings for acute or chronic illnesses, and patient  
2416 counseling to promote overall wellness and avoid the need for  
2417 emergency services.

2418 (f) "Primary care" means health care services focused  
2419 primarily on preventive care, wellness care, and treatment for  
2420 common illnesses. The term may include the health care provider  
2421 serving as a patient's entry point into the overall health care  
2422 system and coordinating a patient's care among specialists or  
2423 acute care settings. The term does not include elective services  
2424 provided solely for cosmetic purposes.

2425 (g) "Program" means the Rural Access to Primary and  
2426 Preventive Care Grant Program.

2427 (h) "Qualifying rural area" means a rural community as  
2428 defined in s. 288.0657 in this state which is also designated as  
2429 a health professional shortage area by the Health Resources and  
2430 Services Administration of the United States Department of  
2431 Health and Human Services.

2432 (2) The department shall award grants under the program to  
2433 physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous advanced  
2434 practice registered nurses who intend to open a new private  
2435 practice in a qualifying rural area or who intend to open a new  
2436 location within a qualifying rural area if the current private

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2437 practice is located in a different county. To qualify for a  
2438 grant, an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

2439 (a) The practice must:

2440 1. Have majority ownership by physicians, physician  
2441 assistants, or autonomous advanced practice registered nurses,  
2442 or a combination thereof.

2443 2. Be physically located in a qualifying rural area and  
2444 serve at that location patients who live in that qualifying  
2445 rural area or in other nearby qualifying rural areas. The  
2446 practice may also serve patients who reside outside of a  
2447 qualifying rural area. While the practice may use telehealth to  
2448 supplement the services provided at the location, the majority  
2449 of services provided by the practice must be provided in-person  
2450 at the physical location.

2451 3. Accept Medicaid patients.

2452 4. Provide services solely in primary care or preventative  
2453 care, except that a physician, and any nurse licensed under  
2454 chapter 464 or any physician assistant supervised by the  
2455 physician, may provide services at the practice in primary care  
2456 or preventative care, or services that are within the  
2457 practitioner's scope of practice based on the physician's board-  
2458 certified specialty in obstetrics, gynecology, general and  
2459 family practice, geriatrics, internal medicine, pediatrics, or  
2460 psychiatry.

2461 (b) The owners of the practice must commit to providing the  
2462 following information to the department on an annual basis, and  
2463 upon request by the department, for the duration of the contract  
2464 entered into pursuant to subsection (6):

2465 1. Deidentified patient encounter data.

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2466       2. A detailed report on the use of grant funds until such  
2467 funds are expended.

2468       (3) By March 1, 2026, the department shall create an  
2469 application process for eligible physicians, physician  
2470 assistants, and autonomous advanced practice registered nurses  
2471 to apply for grants under the program. The application must  
2472 require a detailed budget of anticipated use of grant funds and  
2473 how the new or existing practice will meet the requirements of  
2474 subsection (2). The department shall establish a ranking system  
2475 to determine which applicants will be awarded grants if there  
2476 are more applicants for the program than can be awarded grants  
2477 with available appropriated funds.

2478       (4) Subject to specific appropriation, the department may  
2479 award grants of up to \$250,000 to eligible applicants. Only one  
2480 grant may be awarded per practice. Grant funds awarded for  
2481 establishing a new private practice or a new practice location  
2482 may be used for any of the following expenses:

2483       (a) Facility construction, acquisition, renovation, or  
2484 lease.

2485       (b) Purchasing medical equipment.

2486       (c) Purchasing or implementing information technology  
2487 equipment or services.

2488       (d) Purchasing or implementing telehealth technology.

2489       (e) Training on the use of medical equipment, information  
2490 technology, or telehealth technology implemented under paragraph  
2491 (b), paragraph (c), or paragraph (d), respectively.

2492       (5) Grant funds may not be used for any of the following:

2493       (a) Salaries.

2494       (b) Utilities.

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- 2495 (c) Internet or telecommunications services other than  
2496 those necessary for implementing telehealth technology under  
2497 paragraph (4) (d).
- 2498 (d) Insurance.
- 2499 (e) Incidental maintenance and repairs.
- 2500 (f) Disposable medical supplies.
- 2501 (g) Medicines or vaccines.
- 2502 (h) Licensing or certification fees, including costs for  
2503 continuing education other than training under paragraph (4) (e).
- 2504 (6) The department shall enter into a contract with each  
2505 grant recipient which details the requirements for the  
2506 expenditure of grant funds for that recipient. The contract must  
2507 include, at a minimum, all of the following:
- 2508 (a) The purpose of the contract.
- 2509 (b) Specific performance standards and responsibilities for  
2510 the recipient under the contract, including penalties for not  
2511 meeting such performance standards and responsibilities.
- 2512 (c) A detailed project or contract budget, if applicable.
- 2513 (d) Reporting requirements for grant recipients to provide  
2514 information to the department under paragraph (2) (b) as well as  
2515 any additional information the department deems necessary for  
2516 the administration of the program.
- 2517 (7) The department may adopt rules to implement the  
2518 program.
- 2519 (8) Beginning July 1, 2026, and each year thereafter in  
2520 which there are outstanding contracts with grant recipients  
2521 under subsection (6), the department shall provide a report to  
2522 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of  
2523 the House of Representatives which includes, but need not be

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2524 limited to, all of the following:

2525 (a) Each grant awarded, including the proposed uses for  
2526 each grant.

2527 (b) The progress on each outstanding contract.

2528 (c) The number of patients residing in rural areas who were  
2529 served by grant awardees.

2530 (d) The number of Medicaid recipients who were served by  
2531 grant awardees.

2532 (e) The number and types of services provided during  
2533 patient encounters in locations opened under the program.

2534 (f) The number of health care practitioners, delineated by  
2535 licensure type, providing services in locations opened under the  
2536 program.

2537 (9) This section is repealed July 1, 2035, unless reviewed  
2538 and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

2539 Section 36. Section 381.9856, Florida Statutes, is created  
2540 to read:

2541 381.9856 Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and  
2542 Education Grant Program.—

2543 (1) PROGRAM CREATION.—The Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric  
2544 Response and Education (SCORE) Grant Program is created within  
2545 the Department of Health.

2546 (2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program is to improve  
2547 patient outcomes and the coordination of emergency medical care  
2548 in rural communities by increasing access to high-quality  
2549 stroke, cardiac, and obstetric care through the application of  
2550 technology and innovative training, such as blended learning  
2551 training programs. Blended learning training programs ensure  
2552 that participants gain both the theoretical foundations of



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2553 diagnosis and management as well as real-world clinical  
2554 experience through scenario-based learning, ultimately enhancing  
2555 decisionmaking and patient outcomes.

2556 (3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

2557 (a) “Blended learning training program” means a structured  
2558 educational model that uses blended learning methodologies,  
2559 including simulation-based training, virtual reality, and  
2560 distance learning technologies, in conjunction with hands-on  
2561 instruction, such as simulation-based practice, and in-person  
2562 skills sessions to provide comprehensive education.

2563 (b) “High-risk care provider” means a licensed health care  
2564 facility or licensed ambulance service that regularly provides  
2565 emergency or ongoing care to patients experiencing a stroke,  
2566 heart attack, or pregnancy-related emergency.

2567 (c) “Rural community” has the same meaning as provided in  
2568 s. 288.0657.

2569 (4) GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

2570 (a) The department shall award grants to high-risk care  
2571 providers serving rural communities to accomplish at least one  
2572 of the following initiatives:

2573 1. Implement a blended learning training program for health  
2574 care providers in stroke care protocols and best practices.

2575 2. Purchase simulation equipment and technology for  
2576 training.

2577 3. Establish telehealth capabilities between prehospital  
2578 providers, such as paramedics or emergency medical technicians,  
2579 and in-hospital providers, such as neurologists, to expedite  
2580 emergency stroke care, emergency cardiac care, or emergency  
2581 obstetric care.

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2582 4. Develop quality improvement programs in one or more of  
2583 the following specialty areas: emergency stroke care, emergency  
2584 cardiac care, or emergency obstetric care.

2585 (b) Priority must be given to proposals that:

2586 1. Demonstrate collaboration between prehospital and in-  
2587 hospital providers; or

2588 2. Show potential for significant improvement in patient  
2589 outcomes in rural communities.

2590 (5) FUNDING LIMITS; REPORTING.—

2591 (a) Individual grants may not exceed \$100,000 per year.

2592 (b) Grant recipients must submit quarterly reports to the  
2593 department documenting program activities, expenditures, and  
2594 outcomes.

2595 (6) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall monitor program  
2596 implementation and outcomes. The department shall submit an  
2597 annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and  
2598 the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of  
2599 each year, detailing program implementation and outcomes.

2600 (7) RULEMAKING.—The department may adopt rules to implement  
2601 this section.

2602 (8) IMPLEMENTATION.—This section may be implemented only to  
2603 the extent specifically funded by legislative appropriation.

2604 (9) REPEAL.—This section is repealed July 1, 2030, unless  
2605 reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the  
2606 Legislature.

2607 Section 37. Subsection (2) of section 395.6061, Florida  
2608 Statutes, is amended to read:

2609 395.6061 Rural hospital capital improvement.—There is  
2610 established a rural hospital capital improvement grant program.

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2611           (2) (a) Each rural hospital as defined in s. 395.602 shall  
2612 receive a minimum of \$100,000 annually, subject to legislative  
2613 appropriation, upon application to the Department of Health, for  
2614 projects to acquire, repair, improve, or upgrade systems,  
2615 facilities, or equipment. Such projects may include, but are not  
2616 limited to, the following:

2617           1. Establishing mobile care units to provide primary care  
2618 services, behavioral health services, or obstetric and  
2619 gynecological services in rural health professional shortage  
2620 areas.

2621           2. Establishing telehealth kiosks to provide urgent care  
2622 and primary care services remotely in rural health professional  
2623 shortage areas.

2624           (b) As used in this subsection, the term:

2625           1. "Preventive care" means routine health care services  
2626 designed to prevent illness. The term includes, but is not  
2627 limited to, general physical examinations provided on an annual  
2628 basis, screenings for acute or chronic illnesses, and patient  
2629 counseling to promote overall wellness and avoid the need for  
2630 emergency services.

2631           2. "Primary care" means health care services focused  
2632 primarily on preventive care, wellness care, and treatment for  
2633 common illnesses. The term may include the health care provider  
2634 serving as a patient's entry point into the overall health care  
2635 system and coordinating a patient's care among specialists or  
2636 acute care settings. The term does not include elective services  
2637 provided solely for cosmetic purposes.

2638           3. "Rural health professional shortage area" means a rural  
2639 community as defined in s. 288.0657 which is also designated as

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2640 a health professional shortage area by the Health Resources and  
2641 Services Administration of the United States Department of  
2642 Health and Human Services.

2643 Section 38. Subsection (3) of section 420.9073, Florida  
2644 Statutes, is amended to read:

2645 420.9073 Local housing distributions.—

2646 (3) Calculation of guaranteed amounts:

2647 (a) The guaranteed amount under subsection (1) shall be  
2648 calculated for each state fiscal year by multiplying \$1 million  
2649 ~~\$350,000~~ by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of  
2650 funds distributed to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund  
2651 pursuant to s. 201.15(4) (c) and the denominator of which is the  
2652 total amount of funds distributed to the Local Government  
2653 Housing Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15.

2654 (b) The guaranteed amount under subsection (2) shall be  
2655 calculated for each state fiscal year by multiplying \$1 million  
2656 ~~\$350,000~~ by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of  
2657 funds distributed to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund  
2658 pursuant to s. 201.15(4) (d) and the denominator of which is the  
2659 total amount of funds distributed to the Local Government  
2660 Housing Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15.

2661 Section 39. Paragraph (n) of subsection (5) of section  
2662 420.9075, Florida Statutes, is amended, paragraph (o) is added  
2663 to that subsection, and paragraph (b) of subsection (13) of that  
2664 section is reenacted, to read:

2665 420.9075 Local housing assistance plans; partnerships.—

2666 (5) The following criteria apply to awards made to eligible  
2667 sponsors or eligible persons for the purpose of providing  
2668 eligible housing:

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2669 (n) Funds from the local housing distribution not used to  
2670 meet the criteria established in paragraph (a), ~~or~~ paragraph  
2671 (c), or paragraph (o), or not used for the administration of a  
2672 local housing assistance plan must be used for housing  
2673 production and finance activities, including, but not limited  
2674 to, financing preconstruction activities or the purchase of  
2675 existing units, providing rental housing, and providing home  
2676 ownership training to prospective home buyers and owners of  
2677 homes assisted through the local housing assistance plan.

2678 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (a) and  
2679 (c), program income as defined in s. 420.9071(26) may also be  
2680 used to fund activities described in this paragraph.

2681 2. When preconstruction due-diligence activities conducted  
2682 as part of a preservation strategy show that preservation of the  
2683 units is not feasible and will not result in the production of  
2684 an eligible unit, such costs shall be deemed a program expense  
2685 rather than an administrative expense if such program expenses  
2686 do not exceed 3 percent of the annual local housing  
2687 distribution.

2688 3. If both an award under the local housing assistance plan  
2689 and federal low-income housing tax credits are used to assist a  
2690 project and there is a conflict between the criteria prescribed  
2691 in this subsection and the requirements of s. 42 of the Internal  
2692 Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, the county or eligible  
2693 municipality may resolve the conflict by giving precedence to  
2694 the requirements of s. 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986,  
2695 as amended, in lieu of following the criteria prescribed in this  
2696 subsection with the exception of paragraphs (a) and (g) of this  
2697 subsection.

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2698 4. Each county and each eligible municipality may award  
2699 funds as a grant for construction, rehabilitation, or repair as  
2700 part of disaster recovery or emergency repairs or to remedy  
2701 accessibility or health and safety deficiencies. Any other  
2702 grants must be approved as part of the local housing assistance  
2703 plan.

2704 (o) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a) and (c), up to 25  
2705 percent of the funds made available in each county and eligible  
2706 municipality from the local housing distribution may be used to  
2707 preserve multifamily affordable rental housing funded through  
2708 United States Department of Agriculture loans. These funds may  
2709 be used to rehabilitate housing, extend affordability periods,  
2710 or acquire or transfer properties in partnership with private  
2711 organizations. This paragraph expires on June 30, 2031.

2712 (13)

2713 (b) If, as a result of its review of the annual report, the  
2714 corporation determines that a county or eligible municipality  
2715 has failed to implement a local housing incentive strategy, or,  
2716 if applicable, a local housing incentive plan, it shall send a  
2717 notice of termination of the local government's share of the  
2718 local housing distribution by certified mail to the affected  
2719 county or eligible municipality.

2720 1. The notice must specify a date of termination of the  
2721 funding if the affected county or eligible municipality does not  
2722 implement the plan or strategy and provide for a local response.  
2723 A county or eligible municipality shall respond to the  
2724 corporation within 30 days after receipt of the notice of  
2725 termination.

2726 2. The corporation shall consider the local response that

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2727 extenuating circumstances precluded implementation and grant an  
2728 extension to the timeframe for implementation. Such an extension  
2729 shall be made in the form of an extension agreement that  
2730 provides a timeframe for implementation. The chief elected  
2731 official of a county or eligible municipality or his or her  
2732 designee shall have the authority to enter into the agreement on  
2733 behalf of the local government.

2734 3. If the county or the eligible municipality has not  
2735 implemented the incentive strategy or entered into an extension  
2736 agreement by the termination date specified in the notice, the  
2737 local housing distribution share terminates, and any uncommitted  
2738 local housing distribution funds held by the affected county or  
2739 eligible municipality in its local housing assistance trust fund  
2740 shall be transferred to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund  
2741 to the credit of the corporation to administer.

2742 4.a. If the affected local government fails to meet the  
2743 timeframes specified in the agreement, the corporation shall  
2744 terminate funds. The corporation shall send a notice of  
2745 termination of the local government's share of the local housing  
2746 distribution by certified mail to the affected local government.  
2747 The notice shall specify the termination date, and any  
2748 uncommitted funds held by the affected local government shall be  
2749 transferred to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund to the  
2750 credit of the corporation to administer.

2751 b. If the corporation terminates funds to a county, but an  
2752 eligible municipality receiving a local housing distribution  
2753 pursuant to an interlocal agreement maintains compliance with  
2754 program requirements, the corporation shall thereafter  
2755 distribute directly to the participating eligible municipality

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2756 its share calculated in the manner provided in ss. 420.9072 and  
2757 420.9073.

2758 c. Any county or eligible municipality whose local  
2759 distribution share has been terminated may subsequently elect to  
2760 receive directly its local distribution share by adopting the  
2761 ordinance, resolution, and local housing assistance plan in the  
2762 manner and according to the procedures provided in ss. 420.907-  
2763 420.9079.

2764 Section 40. Subsections (1), (2), and (5) of section  
2765 1001.451, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (6) is  
2766 added to that section, to read:

2767 1001.451 Regional consortium service organizations.—In  
2768 order to provide a full range of programs to larger numbers of  
2769 students, minimize duplication of services, and encourage the  
2770 development of new programs and services:

2771 (1) School districts with 20,000 or fewer unweighted full-  
2772 time equivalent students, developmental research (laboratory)  
2773 schools established pursuant to s. 1002.32, and the Florida  
2774 School for the Deaf and the Blind may enter into cooperative  
2775 agreements to form a regional consortium service organization.  
2776 Each regional consortium service organization shall provide any  
2777 of, at a minimum, three of the following services determined  
2778 necessary and appropriate by the board of directors:

2779 (a) Exceptional student education;

2780 (b) Safe schools support ~~teacher education centers;~~  
2781 environmental education;

2782 (c) State and federal grant procurement and coordination;

2783 (d) Data services ~~processing;~~ ~~health~~

2784 (e) Insurance services;



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- 2785        (f) Risk management insurance;  
 2786        (g) Professional learning;  
 2787        (h) College, career, and workforce development;  
 2788        (i) Business and operational services ~~staff development~~;  
 2789        (j) Purchasing; or  
 2790        (k) Planning and accountability.

2791        (2) (a) Each regional consortium service organization that  
 2792 consists of four or more school districts is eligible to  
 2793 receive, through the Department of Education, subject to the  
 2794 funds provided in the General Appropriations Act, an allocation  
 2795 ~~incentive grant~~ of \$150,000 ~~\$50,000~~ per school district and  
 2796 eligible member to be used for the delivery of services within  
 2797 ~~the~~ participating school districts. The determination of  
 2798 services and use of such funds must ~~shall~~ be established by the  
 2799 board of directors of the regional consortium service  
 2800 organization. The funds must ~~shall~~ be distributed to each  
 2801 regional consortium service organization no later than 30 days  
 2802 following the release of the funds to the department. Each  
 2803 regional consortium service organization shall submit an annual  
 2804 report to the department regarding the use of funds for  
 2805 consortia services. Unexpended amounts in any fund in a  
 2806 consortium's current year operating budget must be carried  
 2807 forward and included as the balance forward for that fund in the  
 2808 approved operating budget for the following year. Each regional  
 2809 consortium service organization shall provide quarterly  
 2810 financial reports to member districts.

2811        (b) Member districts shall designate a district that will  
 2812 serve as a fiscal agent for contractual and reporting purposes.  
 2813 Such fiscal agent district is entitled to reasonable

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2814 compensation for accounting and other services performed. The  
2815 regional consortium service organization shall retain all funds  
2816 received from grants or contracted services to cover indirect or  
2817 administrative costs associated with the provision of such  
2818 services. The regional consortium service organization board of  
2819 directors shall determine the products and services to be  
2820 provided by the consortium; however, in all contractual matters,  
2821 the school board of the fiscal agent district shall act on  
2822 proposed actions of the regional consortium service  
2823 organization.

2824 (c) The regional consortium service organization board of  
2825 directors shall recommend establishment of positions and  
2826 individuals for appointment to the fiscal agent district.  
2827 Personnel must be employed under the personnel policies of the  
2828 fiscal agent district and are deemed to be public employees of  
2829 the fiscal agent district. The regional consortium service  
2830 organization board of directors may recommend a salary schedule  
2831 and job descriptions specific to its personnel.

2832 (d) The regional consortium service organization may  
2833 purchase or lease property and facilities essential for its  
2834 operations and is responsible for their maintenance and  
2835 associated overhead costs.

2836 (e) If a regional consortium service organization is  
2837 dissolved, any revenue from the sale of assets must be  
2838 distributed among the member districts as determined by the  
2839 board of directors ~~Application for incentive grants shall be~~  
2840 ~~made to the Commissioner of Education by July 30 of each year~~  
2841 ~~for distribution to qualifying regional consortium service~~  
2842 ~~organizations by January 1 of the fiscal year.~~

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2843 (5) The board of directors of a regional consortium service  
2844 organization may use various means to generate revenue in  
2845 support of its activities, including, but not limited to,  
2846 contracting for services to nonmember districts. The board of  
2847 directors may acquire, enjoy, use, and dispose of patents,  
2848 copyrights, and trademarks and any licenses and associated ~~other~~  
2849 rights or interests ~~thereunder or therein~~. Ownership of all such  
2850 patents, copyrights, trademarks, licenses, and associated rights  
2851 or interests ~~thereunder or therein~~ shall vest in the state, with  
2852 the board of directors having full right of use and full right  
2853 to retain associated ~~the~~ revenues ~~derived therefrom~~. Any funds  
2854 realized from contracted services, patents, copyrights,  
2855 trademarks, or licenses are ~~shall be~~ considered internal funds  
2856 as provided in s. 1011.07. A fund balance must be established  
2857 for maintaining or expanding services, facilities maintenance,  
2858 terminal pay, and other liabilities ~~Such funds shall be used to~~  
2859 ~~support the organization's marketing and research and~~  
2860 ~~development activities in order to improve and increase services~~  
2861 ~~to its member districts.~~

2862 (6) A regional consortium service organization is  
2863 authorized to administer the Regional Consortia Service  
2864 Organization Supplemental Services Program under s. 1001.4511.

2865 Section 41. Section 1001.4511, Florida Statutes, is created  
2866 to read:

2867 1001.4511 Regional Consortia Service Organization  
2868 Supplemental Services Program.—

2869 (1) There is created the Regional Consortia Service  
2870 Organization Supplemental Services Program to increase the  
2871 ability of regional consortium service organizations under s.

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2872 1001.451 to provide programs and services to consortia members  
2873 through cooperative agreements. Program funds may be used to  
2874 supplement member needs related to transportation; district  
2875 finance personnel services; property insurance, including  
2876 property insurance obtained from any source; cybersecurity  
2877 support; school safety; college, career, and workforce  
2878 development; academic support; and behavior support within  
2879 exceptional student education services.

2880 (2) Each regional consortium service organization shall  
2881 annually report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker  
2882 of the House of Representatives the distribution of funds,  
2883 including members awarded and services provided.

2884 (3) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351,  
2885 funds allocated for this purpose which are not disbursed by June  
2886 30 of the fiscal year in which the funds are allocated may be  
2887 carried forward for up to 5 years after the effective date of  
2888 the original appropriation.

2889 Section 42. Section 1009.635, Florida Statutes, is created  
2890 to read:

2891 1009.635 Rural Incentive for Professional Educators.—

2892 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Rural Incentive for Professional  
2893 Educators (RIPE) Program is established within the Department of  
2894 Education to support the recruitment and retention of qualified  
2895 instructional personnel in rural communities. The program shall  
2896 provide financial assistance for the repayment of student loans  
2897 for eligible participants who establish permanent residency and  
2898 employment in rural areas of opportunity.

2899 (2) ELIGIBILITY.—An individual is eligible to participate  
2900 in the RIPE Program if he or she does all of the following:

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2901 (a) Establishes permanent residency on or after July 1,  
2902 2025, in a rural area of opportunity as designated pursuant to  
2903 s. 288.0656. The address on an individual's state-issued  
2904 identification card or driver license is evidence of residence.

2905 (b) Secures full-time employment as a teacher or  
2906 administrator in a private school as defined in s. 1002.01, or  
2907 as instructional or administrative personnel as those terms are  
2908 defined in s. 1012.01(2) and (3), respectively, in the public  
2909 school district located within the same rural area of  
2910 opportunity as he or she resides.

2911 (c) Holds an associate degree, bachelor's degree,  
2912 postgraduate degree, or certificate from an accredited  
2913 institution earned before establishing residency.

2914 (d) Has an active student loan balance incurred for the  
2915 completion of the qualifying degree or certificate.

2916 (3) LOAN REPAYMENT.—Eligible participants may receive up to  
2917 \$15,000 in total student loan repayment assistance over 5 years,  
2918 disbursed in annual payments not to exceed \$3,000 per year.  
2919 Payments shall be made directly to the lender servicing the  
2920 participant's student loan.

2921 (4) AWARD DISTRIBUTION.—Before disbursement of an award,  
2922 the department shall verify that the participant:

2923 (a) Has maintained continuous employment with the school  
2924 district in an instructional or administrative position;

2925 (b) Has received a rating of effective or highly effective  
2926 pursuant to s. 1012.34; and

2927 (c) Has not been placed on probation, had his or her  
2928 certificate suspended or revoked, or been placed on the  
2929 disqualification list, pursuant to s. 1012.796.

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2930 (5) ADMINISTRATION.—The program shall be administered by  
 2931 the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the Department  
 2932 of Education, which shall:

2933 (a) Develop application procedures requiring documentation,  
 2934 including proof of residency, verification of employment,  
 2935 official academic transcripts, and details of outstanding  
 2936 student loans; and

2937 (b) Monitor compliance with program requirements.

2938 (6) RULEMAKING.—The State Board of Education shall adopt  
 2939 rules no later than January 31, 2026, to administer this  
 2940 section.

2941 Section 43. Subsection (3) of section 1013.62, Florida  
 2942 Statutes, is amended to read:

2943 1013.62 Charter schools capital outlay funding.—

2944 (3) If the school board levies the discretionary millage  
 2945 authorized in s. 1011.71(2), the department must ~~shall~~ use the  
 2946 following calculation methodology to determine the amount of  
 2947 revenue that a school district must distribute to each eligible  
 2948 charter school:

2949 (a) Reduce the total discretionary millage revenue by the  
 2950 school district's annual debt service obligation incurred as of  
 2951 March 1, 2017, which has not been subsequently retired, and:

2952 1. Beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, for any district  
 2953 with an active project or an outstanding participation  
 2954 requirement balance, any amount of participation requirement  
 2955 pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)8. that is being satisfied by  
 2956 revenues raised by the discretionary millage; or

2957 2. For construction projects for which Special Facilities  
 2958 Construction Account funding is sought beginning in the 2025-

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2959 2026 fiscal year, the value of 1 mill from the revenue generated  
2960 pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)8.b.

2961 (b) Divide the school district's adjusted discretionary  
2962 millage revenue by the district's total capital outlay full-time  
2963 equivalent membership and the total number of full-time  
2964 equivalent students of each eligible charter school to determine  
2965 a capital outlay allocation per full-time equivalent student.

2966 (c) Multiply the capital outlay allocation per full-time  
2967 equivalent student by the total number of full-time equivalent  
2968 students of each eligible charter school to determine the  
2969 capital outlay allocation for each charter school.

2970 (d) If applicable, reduce the capital outlay allocation  
2971 identified in paragraph (c) by the total amount of state funds  
2972 allocated to each eligible charter school in subsection (2) to  
2973 determine the maximum calculated capital outlay allocation. The  
2974 amount of funds a school district must distribute to charter  
2975 schools shall be as follows:

2976 1. For fiscal year 2023-2024, the amount is 20 percent of  
2977 the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2978 2. For fiscal year 2024-2025, the amount is 40 percent of  
2979 the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2980 3. For fiscal year 2025-2026, the amount is 60 percent of  
2981 the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2982 4. For fiscal year 2026-2027, the amount is 80 percent of  
2983 the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2984 5. For fiscal year 2027-2028, and each fiscal year  
2985 thereafter, the amount is 100 percent of the amount calculated  
2986 under this paragraph.

2987 (e) School districts shall distribute capital outlay funds

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2988 to eligible charter schools no later than February 1 of each  
2989 year, as required by this subsection, based on the amount of  
2990 funds received by the district school board. School districts  
2991 shall distribute any remaining capital outlay funds, as required  
2992 by this subsection, upon the receipt of such funds until the  
2993 total amount calculated pursuant to this subsection is  
2994 distributed.

2995

2996 By October 1 of each year, each school district shall certify to  
2997 the department the amount of debt service that ~~and participation~~  
2998 ~~requirement that complies with the requirement of paragraph (a)~~  
2999 ~~and~~ can be reduced from the total discretionary millage revenue.  
3000 Each school district shall also certify the amount of the  
3001 participation requirement that complies with paragraph (a), or  
3002 certify the value of 1 mill from revenue generated pursuant to  
3003 s. 1013.64(2)(a)8.b. that can be reduced from the total  
3004 discretionary millage revenue, as applicable. The Auditor  
3005 General shall verify compliance with the requirements of  
3006 paragraph (a) and s. 1011.71(2)(e) during scheduled operational  
3007 audits of school districts.

3008 Section 44. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section  
3009 1013.64, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

3010 1013.64 Funds for comprehensive educational plant needs;  
3011 construction cost maximums for school district capital  
3012 projects.—Allocations from the Public Education Capital Outlay  
3013 and Debt Service Trust Fund to the various boards for capital  
3014 outlay projects shall be determined as follows:

3015 (2)(a) The department shall establish, as a part of the  
3016 Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund, a



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3017 separate account, in an amount determined by the Legislature, to  
3018 be known as the "Special Facility Construction Account." The  
3019 Special Facility Construction Account shall be used to provide  
3020 necessary construction funds to school districts which have  
3021 urgent construction needs but which lack sufficient resources at  
3022 present, and cannot reasonably anticipate sufficient resources  
3023 within the period of the next 3 years, for these purposes from  
3024 currently authorized sources of capital outlay revenue. A school  
3025 district requesting funding from the Special Facility  
3026 Construction Account shall submit one specific construction  
3027 project, not to exceed one complete educational plant, to the  
3028 Special Facility Construction Committee. A district may not  
3029 receive funding for more than one approved project in any 3-year  
3030 period ~~or while any portion of the district's participation~~  
3031 ~~requirement is outstanding~~. The first year of the 3-year period  
3032 shall be the first year a district receives an appropriation.  
3033 The department shall encourage a construction program that  
3034 reduces the average size of schools in the district. The request  
3035 must meet the following criteria to be considered by the  
3036 committee:

3037 1. The project must be deemed a critical need and must be  
3038 recommended for funding by the Special Facility Construction  
3039 Committee. Before developing construction plans for the proposed  
3040 facility, the district school board must request a  
3041 preapplication review by the Special Facility Construction  
3042 Committee or a project review subcommittee convened by the chair  
3043 of the committee to include two representatives of the  
3044 department and two staff members from school districts not  
3045 eligible to participate in the program. A school district may

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3046 request a preapplication review at any time; however, if the  
3047 district school board seeks inclusion in the department's next  
3048 annual capital outlay legislative budget request, the  
3049 preapplication review request must be made before February 1.  
3050 Within 90 days after receiving the preapplication review  
3051 request, the committee or subcommittee must meet in the school  
3052 district to review the project proposal and existing facilities.  
3053 To determine whether the proposed project is a critical need,  
3054 the committee or subcommittee shall consider, at a minimum, the  
3055 capacity of all existing facilities within the district as  
3056 determined by the Florida Inventory of School Houses; the  
3057 district's pattern of student growth; the district's existing  
3058 and projected capital outlay full-time equivalent student  
3059 enrollment as determined by the demographic, revenue, and  
3060 education estimating conferences established in s. 216.136; the  
3061 district's existing satisfactory student stations; the use of  
3062 all existing district property and facilities; grade level  
3063 configurations; and any other information that may affect the  
3064 need for the proposed project.

3065       2. The construction project must be recommended in the most  
3066 recent survey or survey amendment cooperatively prepared by the  
3067 district and the department, and approved by the department  
3068 under the rules of the State Board of Education. If a district  
3069 employs a consultant in the preparation of a survey or survey  
3070 amendment, the consultant may not be employed by or receive  
3071 compensation from a third party that designs or constructs a  
3072 project recommended by the survey.

3073       3. The construction project must appear on the district's  
3074 approved project priority list under the rules of the State

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3075 Board of Education.

3076 4. The district must have selected and had approved a site  
3077 for the construction project in compliance with s. 1013.36 and  
3078 the rules of the State Board of Education.

3079 5. The district shall have developed a district school  
3080 board adopted list of facilities that do not exceed the norm for  
3081 net square feet occupancy requirements under the State  
3082 Requirements for Educational Facilities, using all possible  
3083 programmatic combinations for multiple use of space to obtain  
3084 maximum daily use of all spaces within the facility under  
3085 consideration.

3086 6. Upon construction, the total cost per student station,  
3087 including change orders, must not exceed the cost per student  
3088 station as provided in subsection (6) unless approved by the  
3089 Special Facility Construction Committee. At the discretion of  
3090 the committee, costs that exceed the cost per student station  
3091 for special facilities may include legal and administrative  
3092 fees, the cost of site improvements or related offsite  
3093 improvements, the cost of complying with public shelter and  
3094 hurricane hardening requirements, cost overruns created by a  
3095 disaster as defined in s. 252.34(2), costs of security  
3096 enhancements approved by the school safety specialist, and  
3097 unforeseeable circumstances beyond the district's control.

3098 7. There shall be an agreement signed by the district  
3099 school board stating that it will advertise for bids within 30  
3100 days of receipt of its encumbrance authorization from the  
3101 department.

3102 8.a.(I) For construction projects for which Special  
3103 Facilities Construction Account funding is sought before the

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3104 2019-2020 fiscal year, the district shall, at the time of the  
3105 request and for a continuing period necessary to meet the  
3106 district's participation requirement, levy the maximum millage  
3107 against its nonexempt assessed property value as allowed in s.  
3108 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from  
3109 the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).

3110 (II) Beginning with construction projects for which Special  
3111 Facilities Construction Account funding is sought in the 2019-  
3112 2020 fiscal year, the district shall, for a minimum of 3 years  
3113 before submitting the request and for a continuing period  
3114 necessary to meet its participation requirement, levy the  
3115 maximum millage against the district's nonexempt assessed  
3116 property value as authorized under s. 1011.71(2) or shall raise  
3117 an equivalent amount of revenue from the school capital outlay  
3118 surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).

3119 (III) Beginning with the 2025-2026 fiscal year, any  
3120 district with an a new or active project or an outstanding  
3121 participation requirement balance, funded under ~~the provisions~~  
3122 ~~of~~ this subsection, shall be required to budget no more than the  
3123 value of 1 mill per year to the project until the district's  
3124 participation requirement relating to the local discretionary  
3125 capital improvement millage or the equivalent amount of revenue  
3126 from the school capital outlay surtax is satisfied.

3127 b. For construction projects for which Special Facilities  
3128 Construction Account funding is sought beginning in the 2025-  
3129 2026 fiscal year, the district shall, for a minimum of 3 years  
3130 before submitting the request and for the initial year of the  
3131 appropriation and the 2 years following the initial  
3132 appropriation, levy the maximum millage against the district's

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3133 nonexempt assessed property value as authorized under s.  
3134 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from  
3135 the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).  
3136 The district is not required to budget the funds toward the  
3137 project, but must use the funds as authorized pursuant to s.  
3138 1011.71 or s. 212.055(6), as applicable.

3139 9. If a contract has not been signed 90 days after the  
3140 advertising of bids, the funding for the specific project must  
3141 ~~shall~~ revert to the Special Facility New Construction Account to  
3142 be reallocated to other projects on the list. However, an  
3143 additional 90 days may be granted by the commissioner.

3144 10. The department shall certify the inability of the  
3145 district to fund the survey-recommended project over a  
3146 continuous 3-year period using projected capital outlay revenue  
3147 derived from s. 9(d), Art. XII of the State Constitution, as  
3148 amended, paragraph (3)(a) of this section, and s. 1011.71(2).

3149 11.a. For projects funded before the 2025-2026 fiscal year,  
3150 the district shall have on file with the department an adopted  
3151 resolution acknowledging its commitment to satisfy its  
3152 participation requirement, which is equivalent to all  
3153 unencumbered and future revenue acquired from s. 9(d), Art. XII  
3154 of the State Constitution, as amended, paragraph (3)(a) of this  
3155 section, and s. 1011.71(2), in the year of the initial  
3156 appropriation and for the 2 years immediately following the  
3157 initial appropriation.

3158 b. For projects funded during the 2025-2026 fiscal year,  
3159 and thereafter, the district shall have on file with the  
3160 department an adopted resolution acknowledging its commitment to  
3161 comply with the requirements of this paragraph.

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3162 12. Phase I plans must be approved by the district school  
3163 board as being in compliance with the building and life safety  
3164 codes before June 1 of the year the application is made.

3165 Section 45. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$1  
3166 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
3167 appropriated to the Florida Small Business Development Center  
3168 Network under s. 288.001, Florida Statutes, to expand services  
3169 in rural communities. The funds shall be allocated to the Office  
3170 of Rural Prosperity budget entity within the Department of  
3171 Commerce in the Special Categories-SBDCN Rural Services specific  
3172 appropriation category.

3173 Section 46. (1) For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of  
3174 \$1,827,591 in recurring funds and \$652,327 in nonrecurring funds  
3175 are appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department  
3176 of Commerce.

3177 (2) The recurring general revenue funds shall be allocated  
3178 to the Office of Rural Prosperity budget entity in the following  
3179 specific appropriations categories: \$1,585,823 in Salaries and  
3180 Benefits, \$175,961 in Expenses, \$50,000 in Contracted Services,  
3181 \$10,000 in Operating Capital Outlay, and \$5,807 in Transfer to  
3182 the Department of Management Services/Statewide Human Resources  
3183 Contract.

3184 (3) The nonrecurring general revenue funds shall be  
3185 allocated to the Office of Rural Prosperity budget entity in the  
3186 following specific appropriations categories: \$92,327 in  
3187 Expenses and \$560,000 in Acquisition of Motor Vehicles.

3188 (4) The Department of Commerce is authorized to establish  
3189 17.00 full-time equivalent positions with associated salary rate  
3190 of 1,060,000 in the Office of Rural Prosperity for the purpose

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3191 of implementing this act. The following specific positions,  
3192 classifications, and pay plans are authorized: 1.00 Director of  
3193 General Operation, Class Code 9327, Pay Grade 940; 15.00  
3194 Government Analyst II, Class Code 2225, Pay Grade 026; and 1.00  
3195 Administrative Assistant II, Class Code 0712, Pay Grade 018.

3196 Section 47. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the recurring  
3197 sum of \$8 million from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated  
3198 to the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of  
3199 Commerce to implement the Renaissance Grants Program created by  
3200 s. 288.014, Florida Statutes. No funds may be used by the state  
3201 for administrative costs.

3202 Section 48. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the recurring  
3203 sum of \$500,000 from the Grants and Donations Trust Fund within  
3204 the Department of Commerce is appropriated to the Office of  
3205 Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement  
3206 the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program created  
3207 by s. 288.0175, Florida Statutes.

3208 Section 49. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$4  
3209 million in nonrecurring funds and \$1 million in recurring funds  
3210 from the General Revenue Fund are appropriated to the Office of  
3211 Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement  
3212 the Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund under s.  
3213 288.065, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

3214 Section 50. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$40  
3215 million in nonrecurring funds and \$5 million in recurring funds  
3216 from the General Revenue Fund are appropriated to the Office of  
3217 Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement  
3218 the Rural Infrastructure Fund under s. 288.0655, Florida  
3219 Statutes, as amended by this act.

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3220           Section 51. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of  
3221 \$250,000 in recurring funds from the Grants and Donations Trust  
3222 Fund within the Department of Commerce is appropriated to the  
3223 Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to  
3224 implement s. 288.0657, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

3225           Section 52. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$30  
3226 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
3227 appropriated to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to be  
3228 used to preserve affordable multifamily rental housing in rural  
3229 communities funded through United States Department of  
3230 Agriculture loans. The funds provided in this appropriation  
3231 shall be used to issue competitive requests for application for  
3232 the rehabilitation or acquisition of such properties to ensure  
3233 continued affordability. By October 1, 2026, the Florida Housing  
3234 Finance Corporation shall submit a report to the President of  
3235 the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on  
3236 projects funded pursuant to this section, which report must  
3237 include the number of units preserved and the financing  
3238 portfolio for each project.

3239           Section 53. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25  
3240 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
3241 appropriated to the Department of Health for the purpose of  
3242 implementing the Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care  
3243 Grant Program created under s. 381.403, Florida Statutes. Grant  
3244 funds shall be awarded over a 5-year period. Notwithstanding s.  
3245 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s. 216.351, Florida  
3246 Statutes, the unexpended balance of funds appropriated pursuant  
3247 to this section which is not disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal  
3248 year in which funds are appropriated may be carried forward



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3249 through the 2033-2034 fiscal year.

3250       Section 54. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$5  
3251 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
3252 appropriated to the Department of Health for the purpose of  
3253 implementing the Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and  
3254 Education Grant Program under s. 381.9856, Florida Statutes.  
3255 Notwithstanding s. 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s.  
3256 216.351, Florida Statutes, the unexpended balance of funds  
3257 appropriated pursuant to this section which is not disbursed by  
3258 June 30 of the fiscal year in which funds are appropriated may  
3259 be carried forward through the 2029-2030 fiscal year.

3260       Section 55. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25  
3261 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
3262 appropriated in fixed capital outlay to the Department of Health  
3263 for the purpose of implementing the rural hospital capital  
3264 improvement grant program under s. 395.6061, Florida Statutes.

3265       Section 56. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of  
3266 \$187,255 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund and  
3267 \$250,358 in recurring funds from the Medical Care Trust Fund are  
3268 appropriated to the Agency for Health Care Administration to  
3269 establish a Diagnosis-Related Grouping (DRG) reimbursement  
3270 methodology for critical access hospitals, as defined in s.  
3271 408.07, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of providing inpatient  
3272 reimbursement to such a hospital in amounts comparable to the  
3273 reimbursement the hospital would receive for inpatient services  
3274 from the federal Medicare program. The 2025-2026 fiscal year  
3275 General Appropriations Act shall establish the DRG reimbursement  
3276 methodology for critical access hospital inpatient services as  
3277 directed in s. 409.905(5)(c), Florida Statutes. Health plans

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3278 that participate in the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program  
3279 shall pass through the fee increase to providers in this  
3280 appropriation.

3281 Section 57. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of  
3282 \$7,508,124 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund and  
3283 \$10,038,322 in recurring funds from the Medical Care Trust Fund  
3284 are appropriated to the Agency for Health Care Administration to  
3285 establish an Enhanced Ambulatory Patient Grouping (EAPG)  
3286 reimbursement methodology for critical access hospitals, as  
3287 defined in s. 408.07, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of  
3288 providing outpatient reimbursement to such a hospital in amounts  
3289 comparable to the reimbursement the hospital would receive for  
3290 outpatient services from the federal Medicare program. The 2025-  
3291 2026 fiscal year General Appropriations Act shall establish the  
3292 EAPG reimbursement methodology for critical access hospital  
3293 outpatient services as directed in s. 409.905(6)(b), Florida  
3294 Statutes. Health plans that participate in the Statewide  
3295 Medicaid Managed Care program shall pass through the fee  
3296 increase to providers in this appropriation.

3297 Section 58. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$3.6  
3298 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
3299 appropriated to the Department of Education to implement s.  
3300 1001.451, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

3301 Section 59. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25  
3302 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General  
3303 Revenue Fund to the Department of Education to be distributed to  
3304 regional consortium service organizations under s. 1001.451,  
3305 Florida Statutes, in order to provide funds pursuant to s.  
3306 1001.4511, Florida Statutes. These funds shall be allocated as

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3307 follows: \$5,555,149 to the Heartland Educational Consortium;  
3308 \$11,912,923 to the North East Florida Educational Consortium;  
3309 and \$7,531,928 to the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium. The  
3310 funds must be distributed to each regional consortium service  
3311 organization no later than 30 days following the release of the  
3312 funds to the department.

3313 Section 60. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$7  
3314 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
3315 appropriated to the Department of Education to implement the  
3316 Rural Incentive for Professional Educators (RIPE) Program, s.  
3317 1009.635, Florida Statutes, as created by this act.

3318 Section 61. Subsection (3) of section 163.3187, Florida  
3319 Statutes, is amended to read:

3320 163.3187 Process for adoption of small scale comprehensive  
3321 plan amendment.—

3322 (3) If the small scale development amendment involves a  
3323 site within a rural area of opportunity as defined under s.  
3324 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(2)(d)~~ for the duration of such designation,  
3325 the acreage limit listed in subsection (1) shall be increased by  
3326 100 percent. The local government approving the small scale plan  
3327 amendment shall certify to the state land planning agency that  
3328 the plan amendment furthers the economic objectives set forth in  
3329 the executive order issued under s. 288.0656(7), and the  
3330 property subject to the plan amendment shall undergo public  
3331 review to ensure that all concurrency requirements and federal,  
3332 state, and local environmental permit requirements are met.

3333 Section 62. Section 212.205, Florida Statutes, is amended  
3334 to read:

3335 212.205 Sales tax distribution reporting.—By March 15 of

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3336 each year, each person who received a distribution pursuant to  
3337 s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. and c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b. and c.~~ in the  
3338 preceding calendar year shall report to the Office of Economic  
3339 and Demographic Research the following information:

3340 (1) An itemized accounting of all expenditures of the funds  
3341 distributed in the preceding calendar year, including amounts  
3342 spent on debt service.

3343 (2) A statement indicating what portion of the distributed  
3344 funds have been pledged for debt service.

3345 (3) The original principal amount and current debt service  
3346 schedule of any bonds or other borrowing for which the  
3347 distributed funds have been pledged for debt service.

3348 Section 63. Section 257.191, Florida Statutes, is amended  
3349 to read:

3350 257.191 Construction grants.—The Division of Library and  
3351 Information Services may accept and administer library  
3352 construction moneys appropriated to it and shall allocate such  
3353 appropriation to municipal, county, and regional libraries in  
3354 the form of library construction grants on a matching basis. The  
3355 local matching portion shall be no less than the grant amount,  
3356 on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to the maximum grant amount,  
3357 unless the matching requirement is waived pursuant to s. 288.019  
3358 ~~by s. 288.06561~~. Initiation of a library construction project 12  
3359 months or less prior to the grant award under this section does  
3360 ~~shall~~ not affect the eligibility of an applicant to receive a  
3361 library construction grant. The division shall adopt rules for  
3362 the administration of library construction grants. For the  
3363 purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

3364 Section 64. Subsection (2) of section 257.193, Florida

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3365 Statutes, is amended to read:

3366 257.193 Community Libraries in Caring Program.—

3367 (2) The purpose of the Community Libraries in Caring  
 3368 Program is to assist libraries in rural communities, as defined  
 3369 in s. 288.0656(2) and subject to the provisions of s. 288.019 ~~s.~~  
 3370 ~~288.0656~~, to strengthen their collections and services, improve  
 3371 literacy in their communities, and improve the economic  
 3372 viability of their communities.

3373 Section 65. Subsection (17) of section 265.283, Florida  
 3374 Statutes, is amended to read:

3375 265.283 Definitions.—The following definitions shall apply  
 3376 to ss. 265.281-265.703:

3377 (17) “Underserved arts community assistance program grants”  
 3378 means grants used by qualified organizations under the Rural  
 3379 Economic Development Initiative, pursuant to s. 288.0656 and  
 3380 subject to the provisions of s. 288.019 ~~ss. 288.0656 and~~  
 3381 ~~288.0656~~, for the purpose of economic and organizational  
 3382 development for underserved cultural organizations.

3383 Section 66. Paragraphs (a) and (d) of subsection (3) of  
 3384 section 288.11621, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

3385 288.11621 Spring training baseball franchises.—

3386 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—

3387 (a) A certified applicant may use funds provided under s.  
 3388 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ only to:

3389 1. Serve the public purpose of acquiring, constructing,  
 3390 reconstructing, or renovating a facility for a spring training  
 3391 franchise.

3392 2. Pay or pledge for the payment of debt service on, or to  
 3393 fund debt service reserve funds, arbitrage rebate obligations,

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3394 or other amounts payable with respect thereto, bonds issued for  
3395 the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or renovation of  
3396 such facility, or for the reimbursement of such costs or the  
3397 refinancing of bonds issued for such purposes.

3398 3. Assist in the relocation of a spring training franchise  
3399 from one unit of local government to another only if the  
3400 governing board of the current host local government by a  
3401 majority vote agrees to relocation.

3402 (d)1. All certified applicants must place unexpended state  
3403 funds received pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s.~~  
3404 ~~212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ in a trust fund or separate account for use  
3405 only as authorized in this section.

3406 2. A certified applicant may request that the Department of  
3407 Revenue suspend further distributions of state funds made  
3408 available under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ for 12  
3409 months after expiration of an existing agreement with a spring  
3410 training franchise to provide the certified applicant with an  
3411 opportunity to enter into a new agreement with a spring training  
3412 franchise, at which time the distributions shall resume.

3413 3. The expenditure of state funds distributed to an  
3414 applicant certified before July 1, 2010, must begin within 48  
3415 months after the initial receipt of the state funds. In  
3416 addition, the construction of, or capital improvements to, a  
3417 spring training facility must be completed within 24 months  
3418 after the project's commencement.

3419 Section 67. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) and paragraphs  
3420 (a), (c), and (d) of subsection (3) of section 288.11631,  
3421 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

3422 288.11631 Retention of Major League Baseball spring

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3423 training baseball franchises.—

3424 (2) CERTIFICATION PROCESS.—

3425 (c) Each applicant certified on or after July 1, 2013,  
3426 shall enter into an agreement with the department which:

3427 1. Specifies the amount of the state incentive funding to  
3428 be distributed. The amount of state incentive funding per  
3429 certified applicant may not exceed \$20 million. However, if a  
3430 certified applicant's facility is used by more than one spring  
3431 training franchise, the maximum amount may not exceed \$50  
3432 million, and the Department of Revenue shall make distributions  
3433 to the applicant pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s.~~

3434 ~~212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~

3435 2. States the criteria that the certified applicant must  
3436 meet in order to remain certified. These criteria must include a  
3437 provision stating that the spring training franchise must  
3438 reimburse the state for any funds received if the franchise does  
3439 not comply with the terms of the contract. If bonds were issued  
3440 to construct or renovate a facility for a spring training  
3441 franchise, the required reimbursement must be equal to the total  
3442 amount of state distributions expected to be paid from the date  
3443 the franchise violates the agreement with the applicant through  
3444 the final maturity of the bonds.

3445 3. States that the certified applicant is subject to  
3446 decertification if the certified applicant fails to comply with  
3447 this section or the agreement.

3448 4. States that the department may recover state incentive  
3449 funds if the certified applicant is decertified.

3450 5. Specifies the information that the certified applicant  
3451 must report to the department.

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3452 6. Includes any provision deemed prudent by the department.

3453 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—

3454 (a) A certified applicant may use funds provided under s.  
3455 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ only to:

3456 1. Serve the public purpose of constructing or renovating a  
3457 facility for a spring training franchise.

3458 2. Pay or pledge for the payment of debt service on, or to  
3459 fund debt service reserve funds, arbitrage rebate obligations,  
3460 or other amounts payable with respect thereto, bonds issued for  
3461 the construction or renovation of such facility, or for the  
3462 reimbursement of such costs or the refinancing of bonds issued  
3463 for such purposes.

3464 (c) The Department of Revenue may not distribute funds  
3465 under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ until July 1,  
3466 2016. Further, the Department of Revenue may not distribute  
3467 funds to an applicant certified on or after July 1, 2013, until  
3468 it receives notice from the department that:

3469 1. The certified applicant has encumbered funds under  
3470 either subparagraph (a)1. or subparagraph (a)2.; and

3471 2. If applicable, any existing agreement with a spring  
3472 training franchise for the use of a facility has expired.

3473 (d)1. All certified applicants shall place unexpended state  
3474 funds received pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s.~~  
3475 ~~212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ in a trust fund or separate account for use  
3476 only as authorized in this section.

3477 2. A certified applicant may request that the department  
3478 notify the Department of Revenue to suspend further  
3479 distributions of state funds made available under s.  
3480 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ for 12 months after



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3481 expiration of an existing agreement with a spring training  
3482 franchise to provide the certified applicant with an opportunity  
3483 to enter into a new agreement with a spring training franchise,  
3484 at which time the distributions shall resume.

3485 3. The expenditure of state funds distributed to an  
3486 applicant certified after July 1, 2013, must begin within 48  
3487 months after the initial receipt of the state funds. In  
3488 addition, the construction or renovation of a spring training  
3489 facility must be completed within 24 months after the project's  
3490 commencement.

3491 Section 68. Subsection (1) of section 443.191, Florida  
3492 Statutes, is amended to read:

3493 443.191 Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund; establishment  
3494 and control.—

3495 (1) There is established, as a separate trust fund apart  
3496 from all other public funds of this state, an Unemployment  
3497 Compensation Trust Fund, which shall be administered by the  
3498 Department of Commerce exclusively for the purposes of this  
3499 chapter. The fund must consist of:

3500 (a) All contributions and reimbursements collected under  
3501 this chapter;

3502 (b) Interest earned on any moneys in the fund;

3503 (c) Any property or securities acquired through the use of  
3504 moneys belonging to the fund;

3505 (d) All earnings of these properties or securities;

3506 (e) All money credited to this state's account in the  
3507 federal Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund under 42 U.S.C. s.  
3508 1103;

3509 (f) All money collected for penalties imposed pursuant to

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3510 s. 443.151(6) (a);

3511 (g) Advances on the amount in the federal Unemployment  
3512 Compensation Trust Fund credited to the state under 42 U.S.C. s.  
3513 1321, as requested by the Governor or the Governor's designee;  
3514 and

3515 (h) All money deposited in this account as a distribution  
3516 pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.e. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~

3517

3518 Except as otherwise provided in s. 443.1313(4), all moneys in  
3519 the fund must be mingled and undivided.

3520 Section 69. Section 571.26, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
3521 read:

3522 571.26 Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust  
3523 Fund.—There is hereby created the Florida Agricultural  
3524 Promotional Campaign Trust Fund within the Department of  
3525 Agriculture and Consumer Services to receive all moneys related  
3526 to the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign. Moneys  
3527 deposited in the trust fund shall be appropriated for the sole  
3528 purpose of implementing the Florida Agricultural Promotional  
3529 Campaign, except for money deposited in the trust fund pursuant  
3530 to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.h. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.h.~~, which shall be held  
3531 separately and used solely for the purposes identified in s.  
3532 571.265.

3533 Section 70. Subsection (2) of section 571.265, Florida  
3534 Statutes, is amended to read:

3535 571.265 Promotion of Florida thoroughbred breeding and of  
3536 thoroughbred racing at Florida thoroughbred tracks; distribution  
3537 of funds.—

3538 (2) Funds deposited into the Florida Agricultural

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3539 Promotional Campaign Trust Fund pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.f.  
3540 ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.f.~~ shall be used by the department to encourage  
3541 the agricultural activity of breeding thoroughbred racehorses in  
3542 this state and to enhance thoroughbred racing conducted at  
3543 thoroughbred tracks in this state as provided in this section.  
3544 If the funds made available under this section are not fully  
3545 used in any one fiscal year, any unused amounts shall be carried  
3546 forward in the trust fund into future fiscal years and made  
3547 available for distribution as provided in this section.

3548 Section 71. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3549 made by this act to section 20.60, Florida Statutes, in a  
3550 reference thereto, subsection (8) of section 288.9935, Florida  
3551 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3552 288.9935 Microfinance Guarantee Program.—

3553 (8) The department must, in the department's report  
3554 required under s. 20.60(10), include an annual report on the  
3555 program. The report must, at a minimum, provide:

3556 (a) A comprehensive description of the program, including  
3557 an evaluation of its application and guarantee activities,  
3558 recommendations for change, and identification of any other  
3559 state programs that overlap with the program;

3560 (b) An assessment of the current availability of and access  
3561 to credit for entrepreneurs and small businesses in this state;

3562 (c) A summary of the financial and employment results of  
3563 the entrepreneurs and small businesses receiving loan  
3564 guarantees, including the number of full-time equivalent jobs  
3565 created as a result of the guaranteed loans and the amount of  
3566 wages paid to employees in the newly created jobs;

3567 (d) Industry data about the borrowers, including the six-

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3568 digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)  
3569 code;

3570 (e) The name and location of lenders that receive loan  
3571 guarantees;

3572 (f) The number of loan guarantee applications received;

3573 (g) The number, duration, location, and amount of  
3574 guarantees made;

3575 (h) The number and amount of guaranteed loans outstanding,  
3576 if any;

3577 (i) The number and amount of guaranteed loans with payments  
3578 overdue, if any;

3579 (j) The number and amount of guaranteed loans in default,  
3580 if any;

3581 (k) The repayment history of the guaranteed loans made; and

3582 (l) An evaluation of the program's ability to meet the  
3583 financial performance measures and objectives specified in  
3584 subsection (3).

3585 Section 72. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3586 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3587 reference thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section  
3588 125.0104, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3589 125.0104 Tourist development tax; procedure for levying;  
3590 authorized uses; referendum; enforcement.—

3591 (5) AUTHORIZED USES OF REVENUE.—

3592 (c) A county located adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico or the  
3593 Atlantic Ocean, except a county that receives revenue from taxes  
3594 levied pursuant to s. 125.0108, which meets the following  
3595 criteria may use up to 10 percent of the tax revenue received  
3596 pursuant to this section to reimburse expenses incurred in

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3597 providing public safety services, including emergency medical  
3598 services as defined in s. 401.107(3), and law enforcement  
3599 services, which are needed to address impacts related to  
3600 increased tourism and visitors to an area. However, if taxes  
3601 collected pursuant to this section are used to reimburse  
3602 emergency medical services or public safety services for tourism  
3603 or special events, the governing board of a county or  
3604 municipality may not use such taxes to supplant the normal  
3605 operating expenses of an emergency medical services department,  
3606 a fire department, a sheriff's office, or a police department.  
3607 To receive reimbursement, the county must:

3608 1.a. Generate a minimum of \$10 million in annual proceeds  
3609 from any tax, or any combination of taxes, authorized to be  
3610 levied pursuant to this section;

3611 b. Have at least three municipalities; and

3612 c. Have an estimated population of less than 275,000,  
3613 according to the most recent population estimate prepared  
3614 pursuant to s. 186.901, excluding the inmate population; or

3615 2. Be a fiscally constrained county as described in s.  
3616 218.67(1).

3617  
3618 The board of county commissioners must by majority vote approve  
3619 reimbursement made pursuant to this paragraph upon receipt of a  
3620 recommendation from the tourist development council.

3621 Section 73. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3622 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3623 reference thereto, subsection (3) of section 193.624, Florida  
3624 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3625 193.624 Assessment of renewable energy source devices.—

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3626 (3) This section applies to the installation of a renewable  
3627 energy source device installed on or after January 1, 2013, to  
3628 new and existing residential real property. This section applies  
3629 to a renewable energy source device installed on or after  
3630 January 1, 2018, to all other real property, except when  
3631 installed as part of a project planned for a location in a  
3632 fiscally constrained county, as defined in s. 218.67(1), and for  
3633 which an application for a comprehensive plan amendment or  
3634 planned unit development zoning has been filed with the county  
3635 on or before December 31, 2017.

3636 Section 74. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3637 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3638 reference thereto, subsection (2) of section 196.182, Florida  
3639 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3640 196.182 Exemption of renewable energy source devices.—

3641 (2) The exemption provided in this section does not apply  
3642 to a renewable energy source device that is installed as part of  
3643 a project planned for a location in a fiscally constrained  
3644 county, as defined in s. 218.67(1), and for which an application  
3645 for a comprehensive plan amendment or planned unit development  
3646 zoning has been filed with the county on or before December 31,  
3647 2017.

3648 Section 75. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3649 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3650 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.12, Florida  
3651 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3652 218.12 Appropriations to offset reductions in ad valorem  
3653 tax revenue in fiscally constrained counties.—

3654 (1) Beginning in fiscal year 2008-2009, the Legislature

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3655 shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem  
3656 tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as  
3657 defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the  
3658 implementation of revisions of Art. VII of the State  
3659 Constitution approved in the special election held on January  
3660 29, 2008. The moneys appropriated for this purpose shall be  
3661 distributed in January of each fiscal year among the fiscally  
3662 constrained counties based on each county's proportion of the  
3663 total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the  
3664 implementation of the revision.

3665 Section 76. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3666 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3667 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.125, Florida  
3668 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3669 218.125 Offset for tax loss associated with certain  
3670 constitutional amendments affecting fiscally constrained  
3671 counties.—

3672 (1) Beginning in the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the Legislature  
3673 shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem  
3674 tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as  
3675 defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the  
3676 implementation of revisions of ss. 3(f) and 4(b), Art. VII of  
3677 the State Constitution which were approved in the general  
3678 election held in November 2008. The moneys appropriated for this  
3679 purpose shall be distributed in January of each fiscal year  
3680 among the fiscally constrained counties based on each county's  
3681 proportion of the total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue  
3682 resulting from the implementation of the revisions.

3683 Section 77. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment

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3684 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3685 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.135, Florida  
3686 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3687       218.135 Offset for tax loss associated with reductions in  
3688 value of certain citrus fruit packing and processing equipment.—

3689       (1) For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Legislature shall  
3690 appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem tax  
3691 revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as defined  
3692 in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the  
3693 implementation of s. 193.4516. The moneys appropriated for this  
3694 purpose shall be distributed in January 2019 among the fiscally  
3695 constrained counties based on each county's proportion of the  
3696 total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the  
3697 implementation of s. 193.4516.

3698       Section 78. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3699 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3700 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.136, Florida  
3701 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3702       218.136 Offset for ad valorem revenue loss affecting  
3703 fiscally constrained counties.—

3704       (1) Beginning in fiscal year 2025-2026, the Legislature  
3705 shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem  
3706 tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as  
3707 defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the  
3708 implementation of revisions of s. 6(a), Art. VII of the State  
3709 Constitution approved in the November 2024 general election. The  
3710 moneys appropriated for this purpose shall be distributed in  
3711 January of each fiscal year among the fiscally constrained  
3712 counties based on each county's proportion of the total



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3713 reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the  
3714 implementation of the revision of s. 6(a), Art. VII of the State  
3715 Constitution.

3716 Section 79. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3717 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3718 reference thereto, paragraph (cc) of subsection (2) of section  
3719 252.35, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3720 252.35 Emergency management powers; Division of Emergency  
3721 Management.—

3722 (2) The division is responsible for carrying out the  
3723 provisions of ss. 252.31-252.90. In performing its duties, the  
3724 division shall:

3725 (cc) Prioritize technical assistance and training to  
3726 fiscally constrained counties as defined in s. 218.67(1) on  
3727 aspects of safety measures, preparedness, prevention, response,  
3728 recovery, and mitigation relating to natural disasters and  
3729 emergencies.

3730 Section 80. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3731 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3732 reference thereto, subsection (4) of section 288.102, Florida  
3733 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3734 288.102 Supply Chain Innovation Grant Program.—

3735 (4) A minimum of a one-to-one match of nonstate resources,  
3736 including local, federal, or private funds, to the state  
3737 contribution is required. An award may not be made for a project  
3738 that is receiving or using state funding from another state  
3739 source or statutory program, including tax credits. The one-to-  
3740 one match requirement is waived for a public entity located in a  
3741 fiscally constrained county as defined in s. 218.67(1).

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3742 Section 81. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3743 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3744 reference thereto, paragraph (g) of subsection (16) of section  
3745 403.064, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3746 403.064 Reuse of reclaimed water.—

3747 (16) By November 1, 2021, domestic wastewater utilities  
3748 that dispose of effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse water by  
3749 surface water discharge shall submit to the department for  
3750 review and approval a plan for eliminating nonbeneficial surface  
3751 water discharge by January 1, 2032, subject to the requirements  
3752 of this section. The plan must include the average gallons per  
3753 day of effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse water that will no  
3754 longer be discharged into surface waters and the date of such  
3755 elimination, the average gallons per day of surface water  
3756 discharge which will continue in accordance with the  
3757 alternatives provided for in subparagraphs (a)2. and 3., and the  
3758 level of treatment that the effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse  
3759 water will receive before being discharged into a surface water  
3760 by each alternative.

3761 (g) This subsection does not apply to any of the following:

3762 1. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is located  
3763 in a fiscally constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1).

3764 2. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is located  
3765 in a municipality that is entirely within a rural area of  
3766 opportunity as designated pursuant to s. 288.0656.

3767 3. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is located  
3768 in a municipality that has less than \$10 million in total  
3769 revenue, as determined by the municipality's most recent annual  
3770 financial report submitted to the Department of Financial

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3771 Services in accordance with s. 218.32.

3772 4. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is  
3773 operated by an operator of a mobile home park as defined in s.  
3774 723.003 and has a permitted capacity of less than 300,000  
3775 gallons per day.

3776 Section 82. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3777 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in  
3778 references thereto, subsections (2) and (3) of section 589.08,  
3779 Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

3780 589.08 Land acquisition restrictions.—

3781 (2) The Florida Forest Service may receive, hold the  
3782 custody of, and exercise the control of any lands, and set aside  
3783 into a separate, distinct and inviolable fund, any proceeds  
3784 derived from the sales of the products of such lands, the use  
3785 thereof in any manner, or the sale of such lands save the 25  
3786 percent of the proceeds to be paid into the State School Fund as  
3787 provided by law. The Florida Forest Service may use and apply  
3788 such funds for the acquisition, use, custody, management,  
3789 development, or improvement of any lands vested in or subject to  
3790 the control of the Florida Forest Service. After full payment  
3791 has been made for the purchase of a state forest to the Federal  
3792 Government or other grantor, 15 percent of the gross receipts  
3793 from a state forest shall be paid to the fiscally constrained  
3794 county or counties, as described in s. 218.67(1), in which it is  
3795 located in proportion to the acreage located in each county for  
3796 use by the county or counties for school purposes.

3797 (3) The Florida Forest Service shall pay 15 percent of the  
3798 gross receipts from the Goethe State Forest to each fiscally  
3799 constrained county, as described in s. 218.67(1), in which a

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3800 portion of the respective forest is located in proportion to the  
3801 forest acreage located in such county. The funds must be equally  
3802 divided between the board of county commissioners and the school  
3803 board of each fiscally constrained county.

3804 Section 83. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3805 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a  
3806 reference thereto, paragraph (f) of subsection (1) of section  
3807 1011.62, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3808 1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual  
3809 allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each  
3810 district for operation of schools is not determined in the  
3811 annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing  
3812 the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as  
3813 follows:

3814 (1) COMPUTATION OF THE BASIC AMOUNT TO BE INCLUDED FOR  
3815 OPERATION.—The following procedure shall be followed in  
3816 determining the annual allocation to each district for  
3817 operation:

3818 (f) *Small district factor*.—An additional value per full-  
3819 time equivalent student membership is provided to each school  
3820 district with a full-time equivalent student membership of fewer  
3821 than 20,000 full-time equivalent students which is in a fiscally  
3822 constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1). The amount of  
3823 the additional value shall be specified in the General  
3824 Appropriations Act.

3825 Section 84. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3826 made by this act to sections 218.67 and 339.2818, Florida  
3827 Statutes, in references thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (6)  
3828 of section 403.0741, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

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3829 403.0741 Grease waste removal and disposal.—

3830 (6) REGULATION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—

3831 (c) Fiscally constrained counties as described in s.

3832 218.67(1) and small counties as defined in s. 339.2818(2) may  
3833 opt out of the requirements of this section.

3834 Section 85. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3835 made by this act to section 288.0656, Florida Statutes, in a  
3836 reference thereto, paragraph (e) of subsection (7) of section  
3837 163.3177, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3838 163.3177 Required and optional elements of comprehensive  
3839 plan; studies and surveys.—

3840 (7)

3841 (e) This subsection does not confer the status of rural  
3842 area of opportunity, or any of the rights or benefits derived  
3843 from such status, on any land area not otherwise designated as  
3844 such pursuant to s. 288.0656(7).

3845 Section 86. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3846 made by this act to section 288.9961, Florida Statutes, in a  
3847 reference thereto, paragraph (a) of subsection (7) of section  
3848 288.9962, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3849 288.9962 Broadband Opportunity Program.—

3850 (7) (a) In evaluating grant applications and awarding  
3851 grants, the office must give priority to applications that:

3852 1. Offer broadband Internet service to important community  
3853 institutions, including, but not limited to, libraries,  
3854 educational institutions, public safety facilities, and health  
3855 care facilities;

3856 2. Facilitate the use of telemedicine and electronic health  
3857 records;

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3858           3. Serve economically distressed areas of this state, as  
3859 measured by indices of unemployment, poverty, or population loss  
3860 that are significantly greater than the statewide average;

3861           4. Provide for scalability to transmission speeds of at  
3862 least 100 megabits per second download and 10 megabits per  
3863 second upload;

3864           5. Include a component to actively promote the adoption of  
3865 the newly available broadband Internet service in the community;

3866           6. Provide evidence of strong support for the project from  
3867 citizens, government, businesses, and institutions in the  
3868 community;

3869           7. Provide access to broadband Internet service to the  
3870 greatest number of unserved households and businesses;

3871           8. Leverage greater amounts of funding for a project from  
3872 private sources; or

3873           9. Demonstrate consistency with the strategic plan adopted  
3874 under s. 288.9961.

3875           Section 87. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3876 made by this act to section 319.32, Florida Statutes, in a  
3877 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 215.211, Florida  
3878 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3879           215.211 Service charge; elimination or reduction for  
3880 specified proceeds.—

3881           (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 215.20(1) and  
3882 former s. 215.20(3), the service charge provided in s. 215.20(1)  
3883 and former s. 215.20(3), which is deducted from the proceeds of  
3884 the taxes distributed under ss. 206.606(1), 207.026,  
3885 212.0501(6), and 319.32(5), shall be eliminated beginning July  
3886 1, 2000.

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3887 Section 88. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3888 made by this act to section 339.68, Florida Statutes, in  
3889 references thereto, subsections (5) and (6) of section 339.66,  
3890 Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

3891 339.66 Upgrade of arterial highways with controlled access  
3892 facilities.—

3893 (5) Any existing applicable requirements relating to  
3894 department projects shall apply to projects undertaken by the  
3895 department pursuant to this section. The department shall take  
3896 into consideration the guidance and recommendations of any  
3897 previous studies or reports relevant to the projects authorized  
3898 by this section and ss. 339.67 and 339.68, including, but not  
3899 limited to, the task force reports prepared pursuant to chapter  
3900 2019-43, Laws of Florida.

3901 (6) Any existing applicable requirements relating to  
3902 turnpike projects apply to projects undertaken by the Turnpike  
3903 Enterprise pursuant to this section. The Turnpike Enterprise  
3904 shall take into consideration the guidance and recommendations  
3905 of any previous studies or reports relevant to the projects  
3906 authorized by this section and ss. 339.67 and 339.68, including,  
3907 but not limited to, the task force reports prepared pursuant to  
3908 chapter 2019-43, Laws of Florida, and with respect to any  
3909 extension of the Florida Turnpike from its northerly terminus in  
3910 Wildwood.

3911 Section 89. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3912 made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in  
3913 references thereto, subsections (4) and (6) of section 420.9072,  
3914 Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

3915 420.9072 State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program.—The

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3916 State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program is created for the  
3917 purpose of providing funds to counties and eligible  
3918 municipalities as an incentive for the creation of local housing  
3919 partnerships, to expand production of and preserve affordable  
3920 housing, to further the housing element of the local government  
3921 comprehensive plan specific to affordable housing, and to  
3922 increase housing-related employment.

3923 (4) Moneys in the Local Government Housing Trust Fund shall  
3924 be distributed by the corporation to each approved county and  
3925 eligible municipality within the county as provided in s.  
3926 420.9073. Distributions shall be allocated to the participating  
3927 county and to each eligible municipality within the county  
3928 according to an interlocal agreement between the county  
3929 governing authority and the governing body of the eligible  
3930 municipality or, if there is no interlocal agreement, according  
3931 to population. The portion for each eligible municipality is  
3932 computed by multiplying the total moneys earmarked for a county  
3933 by a fraction, the numerator of which is the population of the  
3934 eligible municipality and the denominator of which is the total  
3935 population of the county. The remaining revenues shall be  
3936 distributed to the governing body of the county.

3937 (6) The moneys that otherwise would be distributed pursuant  
3938 to s. 420.9073 to a local government that does not meet the  
3939 program's requirements for receipts of such distributions shall  
3940 remain in the Local Government Housing Trust Fund to be  
3941 administered by the corporation.

3942 Section 90. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3943 made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in a  
3944 reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (7) of section



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3945 420.9076, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3946 420.9076 Adoption of affordable housing incentive  
3947 strategies; committees.—

3948 (7) The governing board of the county or the eligible  
3949 municipality shall notify the corporation by certified mail of  
3950 its adoption of an amendment of its local housing assistance  
3951 plan to incorporate local housing incentive strategies. The  
3952 notice must include a copy of the approved amended plan.

3953 (b) If a county fails to timely adopt an amended local  
3954 housing assistance plan to incorporate local housing incentive  
3955 strategies but an eligible municipality receiving a local  
3956 housing distribution pursuant to an interlocal agreement within  
3957 the county does timely adopt an amended local housing assistance  
3958 plan to incorporate local housing incentive strategies, the  
3959 corporation, after issuance of a notice of termination, shall  
3960 thereafter distribute directly to the participating eligible  
3961 municipality its share calculated in the manner provided in s.  
3962 420.9073.

3963 Section 91. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
3964 made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in a  
3965 reference thereto, subsection (2) of section 420.9079, Florida  
3966 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3967 420.9079 Local Government Housing Trust Fund.—

3968 (2) The corporation shall administer the fund exclusively  
3969 for the purpose of implementing the programs described in ss.  
3970 420.907-420.9076 and this section. With the exception of  
3971 monitoring the activities of counties and eligible  
3972 municipalities to determine local compliance with program  
3973 requirements, the corporation shall not receive appropriations

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3974 from the fund for administrative or personnel costs. For the  
3975 purpose of implementing the compliance monitoring provisions of  
3976 s. 420.9075(9), the corporation may request a maximum of one-  
3977 quarter of 1 percent of the annual appropriation per state  
3978 fiscal year. When such funding is appropriated, the corporation  
3979 shall deduct the amount appropriated prior to calculating the  
3980 local housing distribution pursuant to ss. 420.9072 and  
3981 420.9073.

3982 Section 92. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.