

By Senator Lawson

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to agriculture; directing the
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
to screen units of local government for the
certification and funding of
agriculture-promotion facilities; defining the
term "agriculture-promotion facilities";
providing criteria for certification and
funding; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Agriculture promotion facility.--(1) The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall serve as the state agency for screening applicants for state funding pursuant to this section and for certifying a unit of local government as entitled to funding for a qualified agriculture-promotion facility.

(2) The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall develop rules for the receipt and processing of applications for the funding of projects pursuant to this section.

(3) As used in this section, the term "agriculture-promotion facility" means a convention center, exposition hall, or other capital project that can be used for conventions, agriculture and livestock events, and other exhibitions.

(4) Before qualifying for certification as an agriculture-promotion facility under this section, the department must determine that:

1 (a) A unit of local government as defined in section
2 218.369, Florida Statutes, is responsible for the
3 construction, management, or operation of the agriculture
4 promotion facility or holds title to the property on which the
5 agriculture-promotion facility is to be located.

6 (b) The applicant has projections, verified by the
7 department, which demonstrate that the agriculture-promotion
8 facility will serve more than 25,000 guests annually.

9 (c) The applicant has prepared an independent analysis
10 or study, verified by the department, which demonstrates that
11 the amount of the revenues generated by the taxes imposed
12 under chapter 212, Florida Statutes, with respect to the use
13 and operation of the agriculture-promotion facility will equal
14 or exceed \$500,000 annually.

15 (d) The municipality in which the facility is located,
16 or the county if the facility is located in an unincorporated
17 area, has certified by resolution after a public hearing that
18 the facility will serve a public purpose.

19 (e) The applicant has demonstrated that it has
20 provided, is capable of providing, or has financial or other
21 commitments to provide more than 40 percent of the costs
22 incurred or related to the design, construction, or renovation
23 of the facility.

24 (f) The agriculture-promotion facility will be located
25 in a county that is levying a tourist development tax pursuant
26 to section 125.0104, Florida Statutes.

27 (5) The department shall competitively evaluate
28 applications for funding of an agriculture-promotion facility.
29 Applications must be submitted by October 1, 2002, with
30 agriculture-promotion-facility certification to be made by
31 January 1, 2003. If the number of applicants exceeds five and

1 the aggregate funding requests of all applications exceeds \$1
2 million, the office shall rank the applicants according to a
3 selection criteria, certifying the five highest-ranked
4 proposals. The evaluation criteria shall include, with
5 priority given in descending order, the following items:

6 (a) The intended use of the funds by the applicant,
7 with priority given to the construction of a new facility.

8 (b) The amount of the local match, with priority given
9 to the largest percentage of local match proposed.

10 (c) The net increase of total convention or exhibition
11 space available within the jurisdiction of the applying unit
12 of local government following construction of the facility,
13 with priority given to the largest percentage increase of
14 total convention or exhibition space.

15 (d) The location of the facility in a brownfield site
16 as defined in section 376.79(3), Florida Statutes, a rural
17 enterprise zone as defined in section 290.004(8), Florida
18 Statutes, an agriculturally depressed area as defined in
19 section 570.242(1), Florida Statutes, or a redevelopment area
20 established pursuant to section 373.461(5)(g), Florida
21 Statutes.

22 (e) The highest projection of paid attendance
23 attracted by the agriculture-promotion facility and the
24 proposed effect on the economy of the local community.

25 (6) Funds may not be expended to subsidize privately
26 owned and maintained facilities.

27 (7) A unit of local government certified as entitled
28 to funding for an agriculture-promotion facility may use funds
29 provided under this section only for the public purpose of
30 paying for the design, construction, or renovation of an
31 agriculture-promotion facility or to pay or pledge for the

1 payment of debt service on, or to fund debt-service reserve
2 funds, arbitrate rebate obligations, or make other amounts
3 payable with respect to, bonds issued for the design,
4 construction, or renovation of such facility or for the
5 reimbursement of such costs or the refinancing of bonds issued
6 for such purposes.

7 (8) The department shall certify no more than five
8 agriculture-promotion facilities. The department may make no
9 more than one certification for any facility. The department
10 may not certify funding for less than the requested amount to
11 any applicant certified as an agriculture-promotion facility.

12 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
13 law.

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16 SENATE SUMMARY

17 Directs the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
18 Services to establish a program for the certification and
19 funding of agriculture-promotion facilities by units of
20 local government.
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