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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to rural economic development; requiring the Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, water management districts; Enterprise Florida, and the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development and other described agencies to cooperate to promote development in described small counties; amending s. 163.3177, F.S.; revising required elements of a comprehensive plan; revising requirements in described areas for the traffic circulation element in the comprehensive plan; requiring described plans in said element; providing for a comprehensive interchange sector plan; providing for multigovernment jurisdictions; providing for content and considerations; requiring coordination with described public and private agencies; providing for a comprehensive access management plan; requiring conformity to the State Highway System Access Management Act; requiring approval by the Department of Transportation; requiring the department to request specified entities to coordinate all applicable parties; providing for a coordinated plan; amending s. 288.0655, F.S.; revising provisions for award of Rural Infrastructure Fund grants; providing for specified in-kind resources matching certain funds; amending s. 337.273, F.S.; providing legislative findings relating to highway interchanges; amending s. 403.973, F.S.; revising provisions for comprehensive plan amendments for described areas; requiring specified entities to develop a master plan; providing purpose of the plan; providing for assistance preparing applications for certain permits;



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31 providing for waiver or reduction of application fees for
 32 certain permits; creating s. 479.262, F.S.; authorizing
 33 the Department of Transportation to establish a tourist-
 34 oriented directional sign program in described counties;
 35 requiring conformance with certain regulations; providing
 36 purpose; authorizing the department to provide described
 37 services; authorizing the department to contract for said
 38 services; providing for charge of fee to participating
 39 businesses; authorizing the department to adopt rules;
 40 providing an effective date.

41
 42 WHEREAS, many small rural counties in Florida do not have
 43 the resources to compete for growth that will provide jobs and
 44 increase the tax base, and

45 WHEREAS, many of these counties are assessing the maximum
 46 millage allowed in order to meet the basic needs of our
 47 communities and schools, and

48 WHEREAS, opportunities to increase revenues to provide
 49 essential services, such as user fees and special assessments,
 50 are currently being utilized, and

51 WHEREAS, these counties are rural and have agricultural-
 52 based economies and tax bases with average incomes below the
 53 state averages, and

54 WHEREAS, interstate exchanges are the most practical areas
 55 in these economically disadvantaged counties to concentrate
 56 efforts to enhance growth for jobs and tax bases, and

57 WHEREAS, the State of Florida continues to be an effective
 58 resource and leader in providing assistance and utilizing
 59 creative ways to support and enhance economic development in all
 60 areas of Florida, NOW, THEREFORE,



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

Section 1. The Department of Transportation; the Department of Environmental Protection; water management districts; Enterprise Florida, Inc.; the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development; and any other agency with regulatory authority shall cooperate to promote economic development in counties recognized as small counties with an emphasis on the development of interstate exchanges.

Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (6) of section 163.3177, Florida Statutes, is amended, and paragraphs (m) and (n) are added to subsection (10) of said section, to read:

163.3177 Required and optional elements of comprehensive plan; studies and surveys.--

(6) In addition to the requirements of subsections (1)-(5), the comprehensive plan shall include the following elements:

(b)1. A traffic circulation element consisting of the types, locations, and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares and transportation routes, including bicycle and pedestrian ways. Transportation corridors, as defined in s. 334.03, may be designated in the traffic circulation element pursuant to s. 337.273. If the transportation corridors are designated, the local government may adopt a transportation corridor management ordinance.

2. For future highway interchanges intersecting limited access facilities on the Florida Intrastate Highway System, or where land use changes are proposed within 1/2 mile of an existing such interchange, the traffic circulation element shall



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91 include a comprehensive interchange sector plan. In instances
92 where the sector plan extends into more than one local
93 government jurisdiction, the local government with the largest
94 amount of land within the sector shall be responsible for the
95 coordination of the sector plan. The sector plan shall prescribe
96 the type and intensity of the land use and patterns. The plan
97 shall also include a comprehensive access management plan
98 showing all driveway locations, median openings, traffic
99 signals, and internal traffic circulation. Any such
100 comprehensive access management plan shall, at a minimum,
101 conform to the State Highway System Access Management Act and
102 any rules adopted thereunder, and shall be subject to approval
103 by the Department of Transportation. Nothing herein is intended
104 to affect Department of Transportation jurisdiction over the
105 State Highway System. In rural communities, the sector plan
106 shall also consider job creation, capital investment, and
107 economic development that will strengthen and diversify the
108 community's economy; projected population growth with and in
109 proximity to the sectors; utilities required to support the
110 proposed land uses; stormwater management and treatment
111 facilities; and other infrastructure needs specific to the
112 interchange sector.

113 (10) The Legislature recognizes the importance and
114 significance of chapter 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code, the
115 Minimum Criteria for Review of Local Government Comprehensive
116 Plans and Determination of Compliance of the Department of
117 Community Affairs that will be used to determine compliance of
118 local comprehensive plans. The Legislature reserved unto itself
119 the right to review chapter 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code,
120 and to reject, modify, or take no action relative to this rule.



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121 Therefore, pursuant to subsection (9), the Legislature hereby
 122 has reviewed chapter 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code, and
 123 expresses the following legislative intent:

124 (m) The Department of Transportation shall consider
 125 compatibility of highway access to and from land uses within
 126 interchange sector plans in coordination with the state land
 127 planning agency and other government agencies, as appropriate.
 128 In rural areas, coordination shall be made with public or
 129 private agencies promoting economic development and job
 130 creation.

131 (n) The Department of Transportation shall, at the request
 132 of the board of county commissioners or a local municipality
 133 with a population of less than 75,000, coordinate all applicable
 134 state, regional, and local parties, including, but not limited
 135 to, the Department of Community Affairs; the Department of
 136 Environmental Protection; the Office of Tourism, Trade, and
 137 Economic Development; the appropriate regional planning council
 138 and water management district; the county or local municipality;
 139 and the local landowners. The parties shall prepare a
 140 coordinated plan with local landowners to encourage well-
 141 planned, environmentally sensitive development on the Florida
 142 Intrastate Highway System within those areas. The coordinated
 143 plan shall consider all existing permitting requirements and be
 144 permissible under existing rules and statutes applicable to such
 145 developments.

146 Section 3. Paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section
 147 288.0655, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

148 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.--
 149 (2)



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150 (e) To enable local governments to access the resources
151 available pursuant to s. 403.973(18), the office may award
152 grants for surveys, feasibility studies, and other activities
153 related to the identification and preclearance review of land
154 which is suitable for preclearance review and plan development
155 as provided in s. 403.973(18). Authorized grants under this
156 paragraph shall not exceed \$75,000 each, except in the case of a
157 project in a rural area of critical economic concern, in which
158 case the grant shall not exceed \$300,000. Any funds awarded
159 under this paragraph must be matched at a level of at least 50
160 percent with local governmental or private funds and in-kind
161 resources provided by agencies participating in the memorandum
162 of agreement authorized in s. 409.973, except that any funds
163 awarded for a project in a rural area of critical economic
164 concern must be matched at a level of at least 33 percent with
165 local governmental or private funds and in-kind resources
166 provided by agencies participating in the memorandum of
167 agreement authorized in s. 409.973. In evaluating applications
168 under this paragraph, the office shall consider the extent to
169 which the application seeks to minimize administrative and
170 consultant expenses. The office may also consider the number of
171 applications for grants authorized by paragraphs (b) and (c)
172 when determining the amount to be awarded under this paragraph.

173 Section 4. Subsection (7) is added to section 337.273,
174 Florida Statutes, to read:

175 337.273 Transportation corridors.--

176 (7) It is recognized by the Legislature that highway
177 interchanges on the Florida Intrastate Highway System are
178 critical elements of the State Highway System and require
179 heightened coordinated management of public transportation



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180 facilities and land use. Areas around the Florida Intrastate
181 Highway System interchanges provide growth and economic
182 development opportunities which may be impeded without specific
183 coordination among state and local governments and the private
184 sector in order to provide and preserve safe and efficient
185 mobility and access to these critical areas.

186 Section 5. Subsection (18) of section 403.973, Florida
187 Statutes, is amended to read:

188 403.973 Expedited permitting; comprehensive plan
189 amendments.--

190 (18) The office, working with the Rural Economic
191 Development Initiative and the agencies participating in the
192 memoranda of agreement, shall provide technical assistance in
193 preparing permit applications and local comprehensive plan
194 amendments for counties having a population of less than 75,000
195 residents, or counties having fewer than 100,000 residents which
196 are contiguous to counties having fewer than 75,000 residents.
197 Additional assistance may include, but not be limited to,
198 guidance in land development regulations and permitting
199 processes, working cooperatively with state, regional, and local
200 entities to identify areas within these counties which may be
201 suitable or adaptable for preclearance review of specified types
202 of land uses and other activities requiring permits. When such
203 areas have been identified, the agencies participating in the
204 memoranda of agreement shall work with the office, the Rural
205 Economic Development Initiative, and the local governments to
206 create a master plan for the area that will serve as an
207 inducement for business location and job creation, the nature
208 and type of which shall be specified in the master plan. The
209 agencies shall also assist in the preparation of applications



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210 for such permits as may be required, and process the
211 applications for approval. The agencies may waive or
212 substantially reduce all application fees for permits required
213 for the implementation of these master plans.

214 Section 6. Section 479.262, Florida Statutes, is created
215 to read:

216 479.262 Tourist-oriented directional sign program.--

217 (1) For counties with a population of 75,000 or less, the
218 department may establish a tourist-oriented directional sign
219 program in accordance with federal regulations for highways
220 without limited access on the National Highway System and the
221 State Highway System to encourage and assist in rural economic
222 development.

223 (2) The department shall provide the services in the most
224 efficient and cost-effective manner through department staff or
225 by contracting for some or all of the services. The department
226 is authorized to contract pursuant to s. 287.057 for the
227 provision of services related to the tourist-oriented
228 directional sign program.

229 (3) Fees for businesses that participate in the program
230 shall be established in an amount sufficient to offset the total
231 cost to the department for the program.

232 (4) The department shall adopt rules to establish
233 requirements for the location of signs, qualification for
234 participating businesses, and administration of the program.

235 (5) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to create a
236 proprietary or compensable interest in any tourist-oriented
237 directional sign or location for any participating business. The
238 department may terminate participation or change locations of
239 sign sites as it determines necessary for construction or



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240 improvement of transportation facilities or for improved traffic
241 control or safety.

242 Section 7. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.