

CHAMBER ACTION

1 The Committee on Agriculture recommends the following:

2  
3 **Committee Substitute**

4 Remove the entire bill and insert:

5 A bill to be entitled

6 An act relating to rural counties; amending s. 163.05,  
7 F.S.; revising requirements for program providers entering  
8 into contracts with the Department of Agriculture and  
9 Consumer Services to provide assistance under the Small  
10 County Technical Assistance Program; amending s. 288.0656,  
11 F.S.; describing designees to the Rural Economic  
12 Development Initiative; updating the list of Rural  
13 Economic Development Initiative members; providing a  
14 definition; creating s. 288.06571, F.S.; providing  
15 definitions; authorizing the provision of grants to  
16 fiscally constrained counties; providing for a grant  
17 application process, a marketing process, review criteria,  
18 a review process, and a reporting requirement; providing  
19 for rulemaking; providing an effective date.

20  
21 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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23 Section 1. Subsection (4) of section 163.05, Florida  
24 Statutes, is amended to read:

25 163.05 Small County Technical Assistance Program.--

26 (4) The Commissioner of Agriculture shall enter into  
27 contracts with program providers who shall:

28 (a) Meet the requirement for nonprofit status under s.  
29 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or be a registered  
30 Florida nonprofit corporation pursuant to chapter 617. Be a  
31 ~~foundation that meets the requirements for nonprofit status~~  
32 ~~under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code with a governing~~  
33 ~~board which includes in its membership county commissioners and~~  
34 ~~professional staff of the county.~~

35 (b) Have ~~substantial and documented~~ experience working  
36 ~~closely~~ with county governments ~~in providing both educational~~  
37 ~~and technical assistance.~~

38 (c) Use existing resources, services, and information that  
39 are available from state or local agencies, universities, or the  
40 private sector.

41 (d) Seek and accept funding from any public or private  
42 source.

43 ~~(e) Assist small counties in developing alternative~~  
44 ~~revenue sources.~~

45 (e)(f) Provide assistance to small counties in areas such  
46 as leadership, fiscal matters, alternative revenue sources,  
47 financial management, accounting, investing, purchasing,  
48 planning and budgeting, debt issuance, public management,  
49 management systems, computers and information technology,

50 transportation issues, economic and community development, and  
51 public safety management.

52 (f)~~(g)~~ Provide for an annual independent financial audit  
53 of the program.

54 (g)~~(h)~~ In each county served, conduct a needs assessment  
55 upon which the assistance provided for that county will be  
56 designed.

57 Section 2. Subsections (6) and (7) of section 288.0656,  
58 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

59 288.0656 Rural Economic Development Initiative.--

60 (6)(a) By August 1 of each year, the head of each of the  
61 following agencies and organizations shall designate a high-  
62 level staff person who directly reports to the head of ~~from~~  
63 ~~within~~ the agency or organization to serve as the REDI  
64 representative for the agency or organization:

- 65 1. The Department of Community Affairs.
- 66 2. The Department of Transportation.
- 67 3. The Department of Environmental Protection.
- 68 4. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- 69 5. The Department of State.
- 70 6. The Department of Health.
- 71 7. The Department of Children and Family Services.
- 72 8. The Department of Corrections.
- 73 9. The Agency for Workforce Innovation.
- 74 10. The Department of Education.
- 75 11. The Department of Juvenile Justice.
- 76 12. The Department of Elder Affairs.
- 77 13. The Agency for Health Care Administration.

- 78 |        ~~14.12.~~ The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- 79 |        ~~15.13.~~ Each water management district.
- 80 |        ~~16.14.~~ Enterprise Florida, Inc.
- 81 |        ~~17.15.~~ Workforce Florida, Inc.
- 82 |        ~~18.16.~~ The Florida Commission on Tourism or VISIT Florida.
- 83 |        ~~19.17.~~ The Florida Regional Planning Council Association.
- 84 |        ~~20.18.~~ The Florida State Rural Development Council.
- 85 |        ~~21.19.~~ The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
- 86 | (IFAS).

87 |

88 | An alternate for each designee shall also be chosen, and the

89 | names of the designees and alternates shall be sent to the

90 | director of the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic

91 | Development.

92 |        (b) Each REDI representative must have comprehensive

93 | knowledge of his or her agency's functions, both regulatory and

94 | service in nature, and of the state's economic goals, policies,

95 | and programs. This person shall be the primary point of contact

96 | for his or her agency with REDI on issues and projects relating

97 | to economically distressed rural communities and with regard to

98 | expediting project review, shall ensure a prompt effective

99 | response to problems arising with regard to rural issues, and

100 | shall work closely with the other REDI representatives in the

101 | identification of opportunities for preferential awards of

102 | program funds and allowances and waiver of program requirements

103 | when necessary to encourage and facilitate long-term private

104 | capital investment and job creation.

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105 (c) The REDI representatives shall work with REDI in the  
106 review and evaluation of statutes and rules for adverse impact  
107 on rural communities and the development of alternative  
108 proposals to mitigate that impact.

109 (d) Each REDI representative shall be responsible for  
110 ensuring that each district office or facility of his or her  
111 agency is informed about the Rural Economic Development  
112 Initiative and for providing assistance throughout the agency in  
113 the implementation of REDI activities.

114 (7)(a) REDI may recommend to the Governor up to three  
115 rural areas of critical economic concern. A rural area of  
116 critical economic concern must be a rural community, or a region  
117 composed of such, that has been adversely affected by an  
118 extraordinary economic event or a natural disaster or that  
119 presents a unique economic development opportunity of regional  
120 impact that will create more than 1,000 jobs over a 5-year  
121 period. The Governor may by executive order designate up to  
122 three rural areas of critical economic concern which will  
123 establish these areas as priority assignments for REDI as well  
124 as to allow the Governor, acting through REDI, to waive  
125 criteria, requirements, or similar provisions of any economic  
126 development incentive. Such incentives shall include, but not be  
127 limited to: the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program  
128 under s. 288.106, the Quick Response Training Program under s.  
129 288.047, the Quick Response Training Program for participants in  
130 the welfare transition program under s. 288.047(8),  
131 transportation projects under s. 288.063, the brownfield  
132 redevelopment bonus refund under s. 288.107, and the rural job

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133 tax credit program under ss. 212.098 and 220.1895. Designation  
 134 as a rural area of critical economic concern under this  
 135 subsection shall be contingent upon the execution of a  
 136 memorandum of agreement among the Office of Tourism, Trade, and  
 137 Economic Development; the governing body of the county; and the  
 138 governing bodies of any municipalities to be included within a  
 139 rural area of critical economic concern. Such agreement shall  
 140 specify the terms and conditions of the designation, including,  
 141 but not limited to, the duties and responsibilities of the  
 142 county and any participating municipalities to take actions  
 143 designed to facilitate the retention and expansion of existing  
 144 businesses in the area, as well as the recruitment of new  
 145 businesses to the area.

146 (b) The term "fiscally constrained county" means a county  
 147 designated as a rural area of critical economic concern for  
 148 which the value of a mill in the county is no more than \$3  
 149 million based on the property valuations and tax data annually  
 150 published by the Department of Revenue under s. 195.052. It is  
 151 the intent of the Legislature that a fiscally constrained county  
 152 for which the value of a mill in the county is at least \$1  
 153 million, and which receives benefits from the state, demonstrate  
 154 progress toward ending its status as a fiscally constrained  
 155 county and, as appropriate, provide increasing amounts of local  
 156 financial support, commensurate with such progress, as match for  
 157 state benefits.

158 Section 3. Section 288.06571, Florida Statutes, is created  
 159 to read:

160 288.06571 Fiscally constrained county grants.--

161       (1) Definitions.--As used in this section, the term:  
 162       (a) "Fiscally constrained county" has the same meaning  
 163 ascribed in s. 288.0656.  
 164       (b) "Department" means the Department of Community  
 165 Affairs.  
 166       (2) The department may accept and administer moneys  
 167 appropriated to it for providing grants to assist fiscally  
 168 constrained counties with government services or infrastructure  
 169 development, including, but not limited to, for use as matching  
 170 funds for larger grants that would improve government services  
 171 or promote infrastructure development or for use as seed funding  
 172 for long-term projects.  
 173       (3) The department, in consultation with the Rural  
 174 Economic Development Initiative, shall establish a grant  
 175 application process for fiscally constrained counties. It is the  
 176 intent of the Legislature that the process promote full  
 177 participation of eligible applicants by providing a grant award  
 178 to each eligible county that completes the application process,  
 179 and award amounts shall be determined using a weighted factor  
 180 based on local efforts, including, but not limited to, mills  
 181 levied. The process must not be burdensome to any applicant. The  
 182 Rural Economic Development Initiative shall provide, or  
 183 facilitate the provision of, technical and administrative  
 184 assistance to any applicant that requests assistance in  
 185 completing an application or to any grantee that requests such  
 186 assistance with respect to grant-related activities.  
 187       (4) The Rural Economic Development Initiative shall  
 188 directly and aggressively inform, through various communications

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189 media, fiscally constrained counties about the grant program and  
190 the availability of funds.

191 (5) The department, in consultation with the Rural  
192 Economic Development Initiative, shall establish criteria for  
193 reviewing grant applications. These criteria must include, but  
194 are not limited to, the need for a grant and the degree of  
195 participation and commitment by the local community in the  
196 proposed grant-funded activity.

197 (6) The department and the Rural Economic Development  
198 Initiative shall review grant applications. The department, in  
199 consultation with the Rural Economic Development Initiative,  
200 shall approve grant award amounts and award grants as soon as  
201 practicable after such review.

202 (7) At least annually and upon completion of grant-funded  
203 activities, a fiscally constrained county receiving a grant must  
204 provide the department with a written report describing the  
205 status of grant-funded activities, the cumulative benefit to the  
206 county of those activities, the nature and amount of local or  
207 other financial support used for those activities, and the  
208 progress made toward ending the county's status as a fiscally  
209 constrained county. The department shall transmit a copy of the  
210 report to the Rural Economic Development Initiative.

211 (8) The department may adopt rules pursuant to ss.  
212 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement the provisions of this  
213 section conferring duties upon it.

214 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.