

HB 1067

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Rural Infrastructure Fund; amending
3 s. 288.0655, F.S.; revising provisions relating to rural
4 infrastructure projects; revising the percentage of total
5 infrastructure project costs for which the Office of
6 Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development may award grants;
7 authorizing the office to award grants for a certain
8 percentage of total infrastructure project costs for
9 certain rural areas of critical economic concern;
10 requiring that funds from the purchase of certain lands by
11 the state or a state agency be appropriated into the Rural
12 Infrastructure Fund; providing an effective date.

13
14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

15
16 Section 1. Paragraphs (b), (c), and (e) of subsection (2)
17 of section 288.0655, Florida Statutes, are amended, and
18 subsection (6) is added to that section, to read:

19 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

20 (2)

21 (b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural
22 areas of critical economic concern as defined by the Rural
23 Economic Development Initiative to infrastructure funding
24 programs of the Federal Government, such as those offered by the
25 United States Department of Agriculture and the United States
26 Department of Commerce, and state programs, including those
27 offered by Rural Economic Development Initiative agencies, and
28 to facilitate local government or private infrastructure funding

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29 | efforts, the office may award grants for up to 50 ~~30~~ percent of
30 | the total infrastructure project cost. If an application for
31 | funding is for a catalyst site, as defined in s. 288.0656, the
32 | office may award grants for up to 60 ~~40~~ percent of the total
33 | infrastructure project cost. Eligible projects must be related
34 | to specific job-creation or job-retention opportunities.
35 | Eligible projects may also include improving any inadequate
36 | infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action that
37 | prohibits economic or community growth or reducing the costs to
38 | community users of proposed infrastructure improvements that
39 | exceed such costs in comparable communities. Eligible uses of
40 | funds shall include improvements to public infrastructure for
41 | industrial or commercial sites and upgrades to or development of
42 | public tourism infrastructure. Authorized infrastructure may
43 | include the following public or public-private partnership
44 | facilities: storm water systems; telecommunications facilities;
45 | broadband facilities; roads or other remedies to transportation
46 | impediments; nature-based tourism facilities; or other physical
47 | requirements necessary to facilitate tourism, trade, and
48 | economic development activities in the community. Authorized
49 | infrastructure may also include publicly or privately owned
50 | self-powered nature-based tourism facilities, publicly owned
51 | telecommunications facilities, and broadband facilities, and
52 | additions to the distribution facilities of the existing natural
53 | gas utility as defined in s. 366.04(3)(c), the existing electric
54 | utility as defined in s. 366.02, or the existing water or
55 | wastewater utility as defined in s. 367.021(12), or any other
56 | existing water or wastewater facility, which owns a gas or

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57 | electric distribution system or a water or wastewater system in
58 | this state where:

59 | 1. A contribution-in-aid of construction is required to
60 | serve public or public-private partnership facilities under the
61 | tariffs of any natural gas, electric, water, or wastewater
62 | utility as defined herein; and

63 | 2. Such utilities as defined herein are willing and able
64 | to provide such service.

65 | (c) To facilitate timely response and induce the location
66 | or expansion of specific job creating opportunities, the office
67 | may award grants for infrastructure feasibility studies, design
68 | and engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and
69 | preparation activities. Authorized grants shall be up to \$50,000
70 | for an employment project with a business committed to create at
71 | least 100 jobs, up to \$150,000 for an employment project with a
72 | business committed to create at least 300 jobs, and up to
73 | \$300,000 for a project in a rural area of critical economic
74 | concern. Grants awarded under this paragraph may be used in
75 | conjunction with grants awarded under paragraph (b) ~~if, provided~~
76 | ~~that~~ the total amount of both grants does not exceed 30 percent
77 | of the total project cost. However, if the state or a state
78 | agency intends to purchase at least 20,000 acres of land located
79 | within 15 square miles of a rural area of critical economic
80 | concern, the total amount of both grants may not exceed 75
81 | percent of the total project cost. In evaluating applications
82 | under this paragraph, the office shall consider the extent to
83 | which the application seeks to minimize administrative and
84 | consultant expenses.

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85 (e) To enable local governments to access the resources
86 available pursuant to s. 403.973(18), the office may award
87 grants for surveys, feasibility studies, and other activities
88 related to the identification and preclearance review of land
89 which is suitable for preclearance review. Authorized grants
90 under this paragraph shall not exceed \$75,000 each, except in
91 the case of a project in a rural area of critical economic
92 concern, in which case the grant shall not exceed \$300,000. Any
93 funds awarded under this paragraph must be matched at a level of
94 50 percent with local funds, except that any funds awarded for a
95 project in a rural area of critical economic concern must be
96 matched at a level of 33 percent with local funds. If an
97 application for funding is for a catalyst site, as defined in s.
98 288.0656, or if the state or a state agency intends to purchase
99 at least 20,000 acres of land located within 15 square miles of
100 a rural area of critical economic concern, the requirement for
101 local match may be waived pursuant to the process in s.
102 288.06561. In evaluating applications under this paragraph, the
103 office shall consider the extent to which the application seeks
104 to minimize administrative and consultant expenses.

105 (6) When the state or a state agency purchases at least
106 20,000 acres of land located within 15 square miles of a rural
107 area of critical economic concern, an amount of funds equal to
108 at least 7.5 percent of the total purchase price must be
109 appropriated into the Rural Infrastructure Fund and used in
110 accordance with paragraphs (2)(b), (c), and (e) in the region
111 affected by the land purchase. The funds appropriated into the
112 Rural Infrastructure Fund must come from the same source used in

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113 | the land purchase and shall be appropriated in equal
114 | installments for 5 years thereafter.

115 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2010.