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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to economic recovery from the Deepwater  
3           Horizon disaster; amending s. 288.0656, F.S.; designating  
4           the Counties of Bay, Escambia, Franklin, Gulf, Okaloosa,  
5           Santa Rosa, Wakulla, and Walton, and the municipalities  
6           within those counties, as a rural area of critical  
7           economic concern for purposes of the Rural Economic  
8           Development Initiative; providing that the area is a  
9           priority assignment, eligible for certain waivers, and  
10          exempt from specified requirements; providing for a  
11          qualified target industry business that relocates all or a  
12          portion of its business to the area from another state to  
13          receive tax refund payments; providing an appropriation;  
14          requiring the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic  
15          Development to consult with certain entities to create a  
16          framework and strategy for the use of funds to promote  
17          research and development, commercialization of research,  
18          economic diversification, and job creation in the Counties  
19          of Bay, Escambia, Franklin, Gulf, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa,  
20          Wakulla, and Walton; providing criteria for such use;  
21          providing for expiration; providing an effective date.

22  
23   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

24  
25           Section 1. Subsections (3) and (4) and paragraph (c) of  
26           subsection (6) of section 288.0656, Florida Statutes, are  
27           amended, and subsection (9) is added to that section, to read:  
28           288.0656 Rural Economic Development Initiative.—

29 (3) REDI shall be responsible for coordinating and  
30 focusing the efforts and resources of state and regional  
31 agencies on the problems which affect the fiscal, economic, and  
32 community viability of Florida's economically distressed rural  
33 communities and rural areas of critical economic concern,  
34 working with local governments, community-based organizations,  
35 and private organizations that have an interest in the growth  
36 and development of these communities to find ways to balance  
37 environmental and growth management issues with local needs.

38 (4) REDI shall review and evaluate the impact of statutes  
39 and rules on rural communities and rural areas of critical  
40 economic concern and shall work to minimize any adverse impact  
41 and undertake outreach and capacity-building efforts.

42 (6)

43 (c) The REDI representatives shall work with REDI in the  
44 review and evaluation of statutes and rules for adverse impact  
45 on rural communities and rural areas of critical economic  
46 concern and the development of alternative proposals to mitigate  
47 that impact.

48 (9) (a) For purposes of this section, the Counties of Bay,  
49 Escambia, Franklin, Gulf, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, and  
50 Walton, and the municipalities within those counties, are  
51 designated as a rural area of critical economic concern.

52 (b) The area is a priority assignment for REDI and  
53 eligible for waiver of criteria, requirements, or similar  
54 provisions of any economic development incentive pursuant to  
55 paragraph (7) (a), except for the Rural Job Tax Credit Program  
56 under ss. 212.098 and 220.1895, and is exempt from the

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57 requirements of paragraph (7) (b).

58 (c) Between July 1, 2011, and June 29, 2014, if the Office  
59 of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development determines it is in  
60 the best interest of the public for reasons of facilitating  
61 economic development, growth, or new employment in the area  
62 designated under this subsection, the office may allow a  
63 qualified target industry business that relocates all or a  
64 portion of its business to the area from another state to  
65 receive a tax refund payment of up to \$6,000 multiplied by the  
66 number of jobs specified in the tax refund agreement pursuant to  
67 s. 288.106(5) (a)1. The business is eligible for an additional  
68 tax refund payment pursuant to s. 288.106(3) (b)4. if the  
69 business meets the criteria provided in that subparagraph. A  
70 project pursuant to this paragraph must meet all of the criteria  
71 provided in s. 288.106 unless such requirement is expressly  
72 waived by the Governor.

73 (d) This subsection expires on June 30, 2014.

74 Section 2. (1) For fiscal year 2011-2012, the sum of \$10  
75 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is  
76 appropriated to the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic  
77 Development to assist in diversifying the regional economy for  
78 the Counties of Bay, Escambia, Franklin, Gulf, Okaloosa, Santa  
79 Rosa, Wakulla, and Walton. The funds may be used to recruit or  
80 expand targeted industries or businesses in the region, promote  
81 research and development, promote commercialization of research,  
82 support job creation, and provide funding for matching grant  
83 opportunities with federal and private grants. The funds may not  
84 be used to pay for administrative costs.

85       (2) The Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development  
86 shall consult with local educational entities, economic  
87 development organizations, local governments, and Florida's  
88 Great Northwest, Inc., to create a framework and strategy for  
89 the use of funds and shall consider local support from these  
90 entities before approving any project. In order to promote  
91 research and development, commercialization of research,  
92 economic diversification, and job creation in the Counties of  
93 Bay, Escambia, Franklin, Gulf, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla,  
94 and Walton, the criteria for the use of funds shall, at a  
95 minimum, require local match, job creation, return on  
96 investment, or capital investment, and shall require expedited  
97 permitting when appropriate and possible by the local  
98 governments required to issue permits. Funds may be used, on a  
99 case-by-case basis, for:

100       (a) Universities and other institutions to conduct  
101 research for existing and prospective businesses, particularly  
102 in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and  
103 mathematics, and to provide funding for the commercialization of  
104 research that will result in the creation of new jobs.

105       (b) Direct recruiting of new businesses to Northwest  
106 Florida, including prospect visits, the development of economic  
107 development information and materials needed to compete with  
108 other states, and events that showcase the region to prospective  
109 industry sectors.

110       (c) Supplementing existing state and local incentives for  
111 the direct recruitment and expansion of companies in Northwest  
112 Florida, including funding for bridging the gap between

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113 incentives available in this state and incentives available in  
114 competing jurisdictions.

115 (d) Matching grant opportunities for job creation, job  
116 training, or university research needed to develop new products.

117 (3) This section expires on June 30, 2014.

118 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2011.