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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
04/04/2017	.	
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The Committee on Agriculture (Grimsley) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete lines 20 - 269

and insert:

Section 1. Section 288.0656, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

288.0656 Rural Economic Development Initiative.-

(1)~~(a)~~ Recognizing that rural communities and regions continue to face extraordinary challenges in their efforts to significantly improve their quality of life and economies,



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11 specifically in terms of personal income, education,  
12 infrastructure, access to healthcare, and job creation, average  
13 ~~wages, and strong tax bases,~~ it is the intent of the Legislature  
14 to encourage and facilitate:

15 (a) Job creation through the location and expansion of  
16 ~~major~~ economic development projects ~~of significant scale in such~~  
17 ~~rural communities.~~

18 (b) Improved community infrastructure, including, but not  
19 limited to, roads, utilities, water and sewer, and  
20 communications.

21 (c) The development and expansion of a skilled workforce.

22 (d) Improved access to healthcare.

23 (2) ~~(b)~~ The Rural Economic Development Initiative, known as  
24 "REDI," is created within the Department of Economic  
25 Opportunity, and the participation of state and regional  
26 agencies in this initiative is authorized.

27 (3) ~~(2)~~ As used in this section, the term:

28 (a) "Catalyst project" means a business locating or  
29 expanding in a rural area of opportunity to serve as an economic  
30 generator of regional significance for the growth of a regional  
31 target industry cluster. The project must provide capital  
32 investment on a scale significant enough to affect the entire  
33 region and result in the development of high-wage and high-skill  
34 jobs.

35 (b) "Catalyst site" means a parcel or parcels of land  
36 within a rural area of opportunity that has been prioritized as  
37 a geographic site for economic development through partnerships  
38 with state, regional, and local organizations. The site must be  
39 reviewed by REDI and approved by the department for the purposes



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40 of locating a catalyst project.

41 (c) "Economic distress" means conditions affecting the  
42 fiscal and economic viability of a rural community, including  
43 such factors as low per capita income, low per capita taxable  
44 values, high unemployment, high underemployment, low weekly  
45 earned wages compared to the state average, low housing values  
46 compared to the state average, high percentages of the  
47 population receiving public assistance, high poverty levels  
48 compared to the state average, and a lack of year-round stable  
49 employment opportunities.

50 (d) "Rural area of opportunity" means a rural community, or  
51 a region composed of rural communities, designated by the  
52 Governor, which has been adversely affected by ~~an extraordinary~~  
53 ~~economic event~~, severe or chronic economic distress, and faces  
54 competitive disadvantages such as low labor force participation,  
55 low educational attainment levels, high unemployment, "D" or "F"  
56 district grades pursuant to s. 1008.34, high infant mortality  
57 rates, and high diabetes and obesity rates, and which ~~is a~~  
58 ~~natural disaster or that~~ presents a unique economic development  
59 opportunity of regional impact.

60 (e) "Rural community" means:

- 61 1. A county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
- 62 2. A county with a population of 125,000 or fewer which is  
63 contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
- 64 3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph  
65 1. or subparagraph 2.
- 66 4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an  
67 incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or fewer and  
68 an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or



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69 resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as  
70 rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress  
71 factors identified in paragraph (c) and verified by the  
72 department.

73

74 For purposes of this paragraph, population shall be determined  
75 in accordance with the most recent official estimate pursuant to  
76 s. 186.901.

77 (4)~~(3)~~ REDI is ~~shall be~~ responsible for coordinating and  
78 focusing the efforts and resources of state and regional  
79 agencies on the challenges of the state's rural areas of  
80 opportunity and economically distressed rural communities. REDI  
81 shall work ~~problems which affect the fiscal, economic, and~~  
82 ~~community viability of Florida's economically distressed rural~~  
83 ~~communities, working~~ with local governments, community-based  
84 organizations, and private organizations that have an interest  
85 in the renewed prosperity and competitiveness of growth and  
86 ~~development of these communities to find ways to balance~~  
87 ~~environmental and growth management issues with local needs.~~

88 (5)~~(4)~~ REDI shall review and evaluate the impact of  
89 statutes and rules on rural communities and shall work to  
90 minimize any adverse impact and undertake outreach and capacity-  
91 building efforts to improve rural communities' ability to  
92 compete in a global economy.

93 (6)~~(5)~~ REDI shall facilitate better access to state  
94 resources by promoting direct access and referrals to  
95 appropriate state and regional agencies and statewide  
96 organizations. ~~REDI may undertake outreach, capacity building,~~  
97 ~~and other advocacy efforts to improve conditions in rural~~



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98 ~~communities. These activities may include sponsorship of~~  
99 ~~conferences and achievement awards.~~

100 (7) (a) REDI shall consist of the following members:

101 1. The executive director of the Department of Economic  
102 Opportunity or his or her designee, who shall serve as the  
103 chair.

104 2. The Secretary of Transportation or his or her designee.

105 3. The Secretary of Environmental Protection or his or her  
106 designee.

107 4. The Commissioner of Agriculture or his or her designee.

108 5. The State Surgeon General or his or her designee.

109 6. The Commissioner of Education or his or her designee.

110 7. The chair of the board of directors of CareerSource  
111 Florida, Inc., or his or her designee.

112 8. The chair of the board of the regional economic  
113 development organization for each of the rural areas of  
114 opportunity or his or her designee.

115 9. Five members from the private sector, three of whom  
116 shall be appointed by the executive director of the Department  
117 of Economic Opportunity, one of whom shall be appointed by the  
118 President of the Senate, and one of whom shall be appointed by  
119 the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

120 (b) In making their appointments, the executive director,  
121 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
122 Representatives shall ensure that the appointments reflect the  
123 diversity of Florida's business community and are representative  
124 of the economic development goals in subsection (1).

125 (c) The executive director, the President of the Senate,  
126 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall consider



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127 appointees who reflect the state's racial, ethnic, and gender  
128 diversity, and who are from rural communities.

129 (d) Each appointed member shall be appointed to a 2-year  
130 term.

131 (e) Initial appointments shall be made by July 1, 2017.  
132 Member terms shall expire on June 30.

133 (f) A vacancy shall be filled for the remainder of an  
134 unexpired term and filled in the same manner as the original  
135 appointment.

136 (g) An appointed member may be removed by the appointing  
137 officer for cause. Absence of a member from three consecutive  
138 meetings results in automatic removal.

139 (h) The chair may request the head of any state agency or  
140 organization to serve on an ad hoc committee as needed to  
141 address issues or projects relating to rural areas of  
142 opportunity and economically distressed rural communities. The  
143 chair shall consider requesting the following individuals to  
144 serve on an ad hoc committee:

145 1. The executive director of the Fish and Wildlife  
146 Conservation Commission or his or her designee.

147 2. The Secretary of State or his or her designee.

148 3. The Secretary of Children and Families or his or her  
149 designee.

150 4. The Secretary of Corrections or his or her designee.

151 5. The Secretary of Juvenile Justice or his or her  
152 designee.

153 6. The Secretary of Health Care Administration or his or  
154 her designee.

155 7. A board member of the Florida Regional Councils



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156 Association or his or her designee.

157 ~~(6) (a) By August 1 of each year, the head of each of the~~  
158 ~~following agencies and organizations shall designate a deputy~~  
159 ~~secretary or higher-level staff person from within the agency or~~  
160 ~~organization to serve as the REDI representative for the agency~~  
161 ~~or organization:~~

- 162 ~~1. The Department of Transportation.~~
- 163 ~~2. The Department of Environmental Protection.~~
- 164 ~~3. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.~~
- 165 ~~4. The Department of State.~~
- 166 ~~5. The Department of Health.~~
- 167 ~~6. The Department of Children and Families.~~
- 168 ~~7. The Department of Corrections.~~
- 169 ~~8. The Department of Education.~~
- 170 ~~9. The Department of Juvenile Justice.~~
- 171 ~~10. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.~~
- 172 ~~11. Each water management district.~~
- 173 ~~12. Enterprise Florida, Inc.~~
- 174 ~~13. CareerSource Florida, Inc.~~
- 175 ~~14. VISIT Florida.~~
- 176 ~~15. The Florida Regional Planning Council Association.~~
- 177 ~~16. The Agency for Health Care Administration.~~
- 178 ~~17. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).~~

179  
180 ~~An alternate for each designee shall also be chosen, and the~~  
181 ~~names of the designees and alternates shall be sent to the~~  
182 ~~executive director of the department.~~

183 (i) (b) Each REDI member from a state agency or organization  
184 ~~representative must have comprehensive knowledge of his or her~~



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185 ~~agency's functions, both regulatory and service in nature, and~~  
186 ~~of the state's economic goals, policies, and programs. This~~  
187 ~~person~~ shall be the primary point of contact for his or her  
188 agency with REDI on issues and projects relating to rural areas  
189 of opportunity and economically distressed rural communities and  
190 with regard to expediting project review, shall ensure a prompt  
191 effective response to problems arising with regard to rural  
192 issues, and shall work closely with the other REDI members  
193 ~~representatives~~ in the identification of opportunities for  
194 preferential awards of program funds and allowances and waiver  
195 of program requirements when necessary to encourage and  
196 facilitate long-term private capital investment and job  
197 creation. The member shall also ensure that each district office  
198 or facility of his or her agency or organization is informed  
199 about REDI and shall provide assistance throughout the agency in  
200 the implementation of REDI activities.

201 ~~(c) The REDI representatives shall work with REDI in the~~  
202 ~~review and evaluation of statutes and rules for adverse impact~~  
203 ~~on rural communities and the development of alternative~~  
204 ~~proposals to mitigate that impact.~~

205 ~~(d) Each REDI representative shall be responsible for~~  
206 ~~ensuring that each district office or facility of his or her~~  
207 ~~agency is informed about the Rural Economic Development~~  
208 ~~Initiative and for providing assistance throughout the agency in~~  
209 ~~the implementation of REDI activities.~~

210 ~~(8) (7) (a) REDI may recommend to the Governor up to three~~  
211 ~~rural areas of opportunity. The Governor may by executive order~~  
212 ~~designate up to three rural areas of opportunity which will~~  
213 ~~establish these areas as priority assignments for REDI. as well~~





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214 ~~as to allow~~ The Governor may, acting through REDI, ~~to~~ waive  
215 criteria, requirements, or similar provisions of any economic  
216 development incentive. ~~Such incentives shall include, but are~~  
217 ~~not limited to, the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program~~  
218 ~~under s. 288.106, the Quick Response Training Program under s.~~  
219 ~~288.047, the Quick Response Training Program for participants in~~  
220 ~~the welfare transition program under s. 288.047(8),~~  
221 ~~transportation projects under s. 339.2821, the brownfield~~  
222 ~~redevelopment bonus refund under s. 288.107, and the rural job~~  
223 ~~tax credit program under ss. 212.098 and 220.1895.~~

224 (b) Designation as a rural area of opportunity under this  
225 subsection shall be contingent upon the execution of a  
226 memorandum of agreement among the department; the governing body  
227 of the county; and the governing bodies of any municipalities to  
228 be included within a rural area of opportunity. Such agreement  
229 shall specify the terms and conditions of the designation,  
230 including, but not limited to, the duties and responsibilities  
231 of the county and any participating municipalities to take  
232 actions designed to facilitate the retention and expansion of  
233 existing businesses in the area, as well as the recruitment of  
234 new businesses to the area.

235 (c) Each rural area of opportunity may designate catalyst  
236 projects, provided that each catalyst project is specifically  
237 recommended by REDI, ~~identified as a catalyst project by~~  
238 ~~Enterprise Florida, Inc.,~~ and confirmed as a catalyst project by

240 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

241 And the title is amended as follows:

242 Delete lines 3 - 12



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243 and insert:

244 Initiative; amending s. 288.0656, F.S.; revising  
245 legislative intent relating to the Rural Economic  
246 Development Initiative; redefining the term "rural  
247 area of opportunity"; revising the duties,  
248 responsibilities, and membership of the Rural Economic  
249 Development Initiative; deleting a provision limiting  
250 the number of rural areas of opportunity that may be  
251 designated; deleting a provision listing the economic  
252 development incentives for which the Governor may  
253 waive criteria requirements or similar provisions;  
254 deleting a requirement that certain catalyst projects  
255 be identified as catalyst projects by Enterprise  
256 Florida, Inc.; revising reporting requirements;  
257 amending