

By Senator Rodriguez

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to employment in the renewable energy
3 industry; creating s. 288.953, F.S.; establishing the
4 Renewable Energy Jobs Assistance Program within the
5 Department of Economic Opportunity; providing a
6 purpose for the program; requiring the department to
7 establish an application process for grants awarded
8 and loans made under the program; requiring the
9 department to determine the need for workers in
10 specific areas of the renewable energy industry and to
11 award grants or make loans based on that
12 determination; providing requirements for loans;
13 requiring the department to adopt rules; providing an
14 appropriation; providing an effective date.

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

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18 Section 1. Section 288.953, Florida Statutes, is created to
19 read:

20 288.953 Renewable Energy Jobs Assistance Program.—

21 (1) The Renewable Energy Jobs Assistance Program is
22 established within the department to support the growth and
23 sustainability of the renewable energy industry in this state.

24 (2) The department shall establish an application process
25 for individuals seeking funds for expenses related to education,
26 training, or retraining for positions in the renewable energy
27 industry.

28 (3) The department shall determine which areas in the
29 renewable energy industry have the greatest need for additional

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30 workers and prioritize the awarding of grants to applicants
31 seeking education, training, or retraining to qualify them for
32 employment in those areas and the making of low-interest loans
33 to applicants seeking education, training, or retraining to
34 qualify them for employment in areas determined to have a lower
35 need for new workers.

36 (4) Loans provided under the program must meet the
37 following requirements:

38 (a) The maximum amount of a loan is \$200,000.

39 (b) The proceeds of the loan may be used only for tuition
40 and related expenses at a state university, a Florida College
41 System institution, or a career center operated under s.
42 1001.44.

43 (c) The term of the loan is 4 years.

44 (d) The interest rate of the loan is 2 percent.

45 (e) For the first 12 months of the term of a loan, payment
46 is due for interest only, payable during the 12th month of the
47 loan term. After that time, payment for interest and principal
48 is due each month until the loan is paid in full. Interest and
49 principal payments must be based on the unpaid balance of the
50 total loan amount.

51 (5) The department shall adopt rules to administer this
52 section.

53 Section 2. For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the sum of \$20
54 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General
55 Revenue Fund to the Department of Economic Opportunity for the
56 purpose of implementing the Renewable Energy Jobs Assistance
57 Program established by this act.

58 Section 3. This act shall take effect October 1, 2018.