

By Senator Gainer

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Northwest Florida Rural Inland
3 Affected Counties Recovery Fund; creating s. 288.8055,
4 F.S.; providing legislative intent; providing
5 definitions; creating the Northwest Florida Rural
6 Inland Affected Counties Recovery Fund within the
7 Department of Economic Opportunity; requiring certain
8 payments to be appropriated annually to the fund;
9 prohibiting such payments from diminishing funds
10 transferred to the Triumph Gulf Coast Trust Fund;
11 requiring the department to grant awards to
12 organizations and local governments for specified
13 infrastructure projects and workforce programs;
14 requiring the department to establish an application
15 procedure and prioritize projects and programs that
16 meet certain requirements; requiring the department,
17 in consultation with specified entities, to review and
18 certify applications; exempting certain funds from
19 reversion; providing an effective date.

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

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23 Section 1. Section 288.8055, Florida Statutes, is created
24 to read:

25 288.8055 Northwest Florida Rural Inland Affected Counties
26 Recovery Fund.—

27 (1) The Legislature recognizes that as a result of the
28 Deepwater Horizon disaster, the rural inland affected counties
29 of Northwest Florida continue to face extraordinary challenges

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30 in significantly improving their economies, specifically in
31 terms of household income, job creation, average wages, and
32 strong tax bases. The Legislature also recognizes that this area
33 is designated as a rural area of opportunity by the Governor
34 pursuant to s. 288.0656. Therefore, the Legislature intends to
35 provide a long-term source of funding for economic recovery and
36 enhancement efforts of the rural inland affected counties.

37 (2) As used in this section, the term:

38 (a) "Fund" means the Northwest Florida Rural Inland
39 Affected Counties Recovery Fund created in this section.

40 (b) "Rural inland affected county" means Calhoun County,
41 Gadsden County, Holmes County, Jackson County, Jefferson County,
42 Liberty County, or Washington County.

43 (c) "Settlement agreement" means the agreement entitled
44 "Settlement Agreement Between the Gulf States and the BP
45 Entities with Respect to Economic and Other Claims Arising from
46 the Deepwater Horizon Incident," which was entered into on
47 October 5, 2015, in the case styled *In re: Oil Spill by the Oil*
48 *Rig "Deepwater Horizon" in the Gulf of Mexico, on April 20,*
49 *2010*, MDL 2179 in the United States District Court for the
50 Eastern District of Louisiana.

51 (3) The Northwest Florida Rural Inland Affected Counties
52 Recovery Fund is created within the department to facilitate the
53 planning, preparation, and financing of infrastructure projects
54 and workforce programs in rural inland affected counties which
55 will encourage job creation, capital investment, and the
56 strengthening and diversification of the economies of such
57 counties by promoting tourism, trade, and economic development.

58 (4) After the transfer of funds to the Triumph Gulf Coast

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59 Trust Fund specified in s. 288.8013, five percent of all
60 payments to the state received pursuant to the settlement
61 agreement after July 1, 2019, shall be appropriated annually by
62 the Legislature to the fund. This subsection shall not diminish
63 the funds transferred to the Triumph Gulf Coast Trust Fund.

64 (5) The department shall grant awards to organizations or
65 local governments within the rural inland affected counties for
66 infrastructure projects and workforce programs that meet the
67 priorities for economic recovery, diversification, and
68 enhancement. Awards may be provided for:

69 (a) Local match requirements of s. 288.0655.

70 (b) Infrastructure planning, design, construction,
71 expansion, or maintenance projects that meet such priorities.

72 (c) Infrastructure feasibility studies, design and
73 engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and
74 preparation activities necessary to induce the relocation or
75 expansion of specific employment opportunities.

76 (d) Grants to support workforce programs that provide
77 participants in the rural inland affected counties with
78 transferable sustainable workforce skills.

79 (e) Grants to the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing
80 Corporation created under s. 288.1226 for the purpose of
81 advertising and promoting tourism and agricultural or
82 agricultural-based products marketed under the "Fresh From
83 Florida" or "From Florida" logos and for promoting
84 infrastructure projects and workforce programs on behalf of the
85 rural inland affected counties.

86 (f) Grants to regionally based economic development
87 organizations representing the rural inland affected counties

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88 for the purpose of building the professional capacity of such
89 organizations and providing technical assistance to businesses
90 served by such organizations.

91 (6) The department shall establish an application procedure
92 for awards and a scoring process for the selection of
93 infrastructure projects and workforce programs that have the
94 potential to generate increased economic activity in the rural
95 inland affected counties, giving priority to such projects and
96 programs that:

97 (a) Generate maximum estimated economic benefits, based on
98 tools and models not generally employed by economic input-output
99 analyses, including cost-benefit, return-on-investment, or
100 dynamic scoring techniques, to determine how the long-term
101 economic growth potential of the rural inland affected counties
102 may be enhanced by the award.

103 (b) Increase household income above the national average in
104 the rural inland affected counties.

105 (c) Leverage or further enhance key assets, including K-20
106 educational institutions, research facilities, and military
107 bases, in the rural inland affected counties.

108 (d) Partner with local governments to provide funds,
109 infrastructure, land, or other assistance to the rural inland
110 affected counties.

111 (e) Benefit the environment and economy of the rural inland
112 affected counties.

113 (f) Provide outcome measures.

114 (g) Partner with K-20 educational institutions or school
115 districts located within the rural inland affected counties.

116 (h) Are recommended by the board of county commissioners of

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117 the rural inland affected county in which such project or
118 program will be located.

119 (i) Partner with convention and visitor bureaus, tourist
120 development councils, or chambers of commerce located within the
121 rural inland affected counties.

122 (7) Applications for awards shall be submitted to the
123 department. The department, in consultation with Enterprise
124 Florida, Inc., the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing
125 Corporation, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the
126 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, as
127 appropriate, shall review and certify applications pursuant to
128 s. 288.061. The review shall include an evaluation of the
129 economic benefit of the infrastructure project or workforce
130 program and its long-term viability. The department shall have
131 final approval of any awards provided pursuant to this section.

132 (8) Notwithstanding s. 216.301, funds appropriated for the
133 purposes of this section are not subject to reversion.

134 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.