

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           requiring the department to grant awards to  
 10          organizations and local governments for specified  
 11          infrastructure projects and workforce programs;  
 12          requiring the department to establish an application  
 13          procedure and prioritize projects and programs that  
 14          meet certain requirements; requiring the department,  
 15          in consultation with specified entities, to review and  
 16          certify applications; exempting certain funds from  
 17          reversion; providing an effective date.

18  
 19 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 21           Section 1. Section 288.8055, Florida Statutes, is created  
 22           to read:

23           288.8055 Northwest Florida Rural Inland Affected Counties  
 24           Recovery Fund.—

25           (1) The Legislature recognizes that as a result of the

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

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

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

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

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

49 (3) The Northwest Florida Rural Inland Affected Counties  
50 Recovery Fund is created within the department to facilitate the

51 planning, preparation, and financing of infrastructure projects  
52 and workforce programs in rural inland affected counties which  
53 will encourage job creation, capital investment, and the  
54 strengthening and diversification of the economies of such  
55 counties by promoting tourism, trade, and economic development.

56 (4) Five percent of all payments to the state received  
57 pursuant to the settlement agreement after July 1, 2019, shall  
58 be appropriated annually by the Legislature to the fund.

59 (5) The department shall grant awards to organizations or  
60 local governments within the rural inland affected counties for  
61 infrastructure projects and workforce programs that meet the  
62 priorities for economic recovery, diversification, and  
63 enhancement. Awards may be provided for:

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

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

67 (c) Infrastructure feasibility studies, design and  
68 engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and  
69 preparation activities necessary to induce the relocation or  
70 expansion of specific employment opportunities.

71 (d) Grants to support workforce programs that provide  
72 participants in the rural inland affected counties with  
73 transferable sustainable workforce skills.

74 (e) Grants to the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing  
75 Corporation created under s. 288.1226 for the purpose of

76 advertising and promoting tourism and agricultural or  
77 agricultural-based products marketed under the "Fresh From  
78 Florida" or "From Florida" logos and for promoting  
79 infrastructure projects and workforce programs on behalf of the  
80 rural inland affected counties.

81 (f) Grants to regionally based economic development  
82 organizations representing the rural inland affected counties  
83 for the purpose of building the professional capacity of such  
84 organizations and providing technical assistance to businesses  
85 served by such organizations.

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

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

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

100 (c) Leverage or further enhance key assets, including K-20

101 educational institutions, research facilities, and military  
102 bases, in the rural inland affected counties.

103 (d) Partner with local governments to provide funds,  
104 infrastructure, land, or other assistance to the rural inland  
105 affected counties.

106 (e) Benefit the environment and economy of the rural  
107 inland affected counties.

108 (f) Provide outcome measures.

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

111 (h) Are recommended by the board of county commissioners  
112 of the rural inland affected county in which such project or  
113 program will be located.

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

117 (7) Applications for awards shall be submitted to the  
118 department. The department, in consultation with Enterprise  
119 Florida, Inc., the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing  
120 Corporation, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the  
121 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, as  
122 appropriate, shall review and certify applications pursuant to  
123 s. 288.061. The review shall include an evaluation of the  
124 economic benefit of the infrastructure project or workforce  
125 program and its long-term viability. The department shall have

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126 | final approval of any awards provided pursuant to this section.

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

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