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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
03/13/2025	.	
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The Committee on Fiscal Policy (Simon) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) and paragraph (c) of subsection (10) of section 20.60, Florida Statutes, are amended, and paragraph (a) of subsection (5) of that section is reenacted, to read:

20.60 Department of Commerce; creation; powers and duties.—

(3)(a) The following divisions and offices of the



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Department of Commerce are established:

1. The Division of Economic Development.
2. The Division of Community Development.
3. The Division of Workforce Services.
4. The Division of Finance and Administration.
5. The Division of Information Technology.
6. The Office of the Secretary.
7. The Office of Rural Prosperity.

8.7. The Office of Economic Accountability and
Transparency, which shall:

- a. Oversee the department's critical objectives as determined by the secretary and make sure that the department's key objectives are clearly communicated to the public.
 - b. Organize department resources, expertise, data, and research to focus on and solve the complex economic challenges facing the state.
 - c. Provide leadership for the department's priority issues that require integration of policy, management, and critical objectives from multiple programs and organizations internal and external to the department; and organize and manage external communication on such priority issues.
 - d. Promote and facilitate key department initiatives to address priority economic issues and explore data and identify opportunities for innovative approaches to address such economic issues.
 - e. Promote strategic planning for the department.
- (5) The divisions within the department have specific responsibilities to achieve the duties, responsibilities, and goals of the department. Specifically:



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(a) The Division of Economic Development shall:

1. Analyze and evaluate business prospects identified by the Governor and the secretary.

2. Administer certain tax refund, tax credit, and grant programs created in law. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the department may expend interest earned from the investment of program funds deposited in the Grants and Donations Trust Fund to contract for the administration of those programs, or portions of the programs, assigned to the department by law, by the appropriations process, or by the Governor. Such expenditures shall be subject to review under chapter 216.

3. Develop measurement protocols for the state incentive programs and for the contracted entities which will be used to determine their performance and competitive value to the state. Performance measures, benchmarks, and sanctions must be developed in consultation with the legislative appropriations committees and the appropriate substantive committees, and are subject to the review and approval process provided in s. 216.177. The approved performance measures, standards, and sanctions shall be included and made a part of the strategic plan for contracts entered into for delivery of programs authorized by this section.

4. Develop a 5-year statewide strategic plan. The strategic plan must include, but need not be limited to:

a. Strategies for the promotion of business formation, expansion, recruitment, and retention through aggressive marketing, attraction of venture capital and finance development, domestic trade, international development, and



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export assistance, which lead to more and better jobs and higher wages for all geographic regions, disadvantaged communities, and populations of the state, including rural areas, minority businesses, and urban core areas.

b. The development of realistic policies and programs to further the economic diversity of the state, its regions, and their associated industrial clusters.

c. Specific provisions for the stimulation of economic development and job creation in rural areas and midsize cities and counties of the state, including strategies for rural marketing and the development of infrastructure in rural areas.

d. Provisions for the promotion of the successful long-term economic development of the state with increased emphasis in market research and information.

e. Plans for the generation of foreign investment in the state which create jobs paying above-average wages and which result in reverse investment in the state, including programs that establish viable overseas markets, assist in meeting the financing requirements of export-ready firms, broaden opportunities for international joint venture relationships, use the resources of academic and other institutions, coordinate trade assistance and facilitation services, and facilitate availability of and access to education and training programs that assure requisite skills and competencies necessary to compete successfully in the global marketplace.

f. The identification of business sectors that are of current or future importance to the state's economy and to the state's global business image, and development of specific strategies to promote the development of such sectors.



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g. Strategies for talent development necessary in the state to encourage economic development growth, taking into account factors such as the state's talent supply chain, education and training opportunities, and available workforce.

h. Strategies and plans to support this state's defense, space, and aerospace industries and the emerging complementary business activities and industries that support the development and growth of defense, space, and aerospace in this state.

5. Update the strategic plan every 5 years.

6. Involve CareerSource Florida, Inc.; direct-support organizations of the department; local governments; the general public; local and regional economic development organizations; other local, state, and federal economic, international, and workforce development entities; the business community; and educational institutions to assist with the strategic plan.

7. Coordinate with the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation in the development of the 4-year marketing plan pursuant to s. 288.1226(13).

8. Administer and manage relationships, as appropriate, with the entities and programs created pursuant to the Florida Capital Formation Act, ss. 288.9621-288.96255.

(10) The department shall, by November 1 of each year, submit an annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the condition of the business climate and economic development in the state.

(c) The report must incorporate annual reports of other programs, including:

1. A detailed report of the performance of the Black



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Business Loan Program and a cumulative summary of quarterly report data required under s. 288.714.

~~2. The Rural Economic Development Initiative established under s. 288.0656.~~

~~3.~~ A detailed report of the performance of the Florida Development Finance Corporation and a summary of the corporation's report required under s. 288.9610.

~~3.4.~~ Information provided by Space Florida under s. 331.3051 and an analysis of the activities and accomplishments of Space Florida.

Section 2. Subsection (5) is added to section 163.3168, Florida Statutes, to read:

163.3168 Planning innovations and technical assistance.—

(5) When selecting applications for funding for technical assistance, the state land planning agency shall give preference to local governments located in a rural area of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656. The state land planning agency shall consult with the Office of Rural Prosperity when awarding funding pursuant to this section.

Section 3. Paragraph (i) is added to subsection (4) of section 201.15, Florida Statutes, to read:

201.15 Distribution of taxes collected.—All taxes collected under this chapter are hereby pledged and shall be first made available to make payments when due on bonds issued pursuant to s. 215.618 or s. 215.619, or any other bonds authorized to be issued on a parity basis with such bonds. Such pledge and availability for the payment of these bonds shall have priority over any requirement for the costs of collection and enforcement under this section. Before distribution pursuant to this



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section, the Department of Revenue shall deduct amounts necessary to pay the costs of the collection and enforcement of the tax levied by this chapter. The costs may not be levied against any portion of taxes pledged to debt service on bonds to the extent that the costs are required to pay any amounts relating to the bonds. All of the costs of the collection and enforcement of the tax levied by this chapter shall be available and transferred to the extent necessary to pay debt service and any other amounts payable with respect to bonds authorized before January 1, 2017, secured by revenues distributed pursuant to this section. All taxes remaining after deduction of costs shall be distributed as follows:

(4) After the required distributions to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund pursuant to subsections (1) and (2), the lesser of 8 percent of the remainder or \$150 million in each fiscal year shall be paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the State Housing Trust Fund and shall be expended pursuant to s. 420.50871. If 8 percent of the remainder is greater than \$150 million in any fiscal year, the difference between 8 percent of the remainder and \$150 million shall be paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the General Revenue Fund. The remainder shall be distributed as follows:

(i) A total of \$30 million shall be paid to the credit of the State Transportation Trust Fund, which funds are exclusively for the use of the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program as provided in s. 339.68.

Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section 202.18, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

202.18 Allocation and disposition of tax proceeds.—The



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proceeds of the communications services taxes remitted under this chapter shall be treated as follows:

(2) The proceeds of the taxes remitted under s. 202.12(1)(b) shall be allocated as follows:

(c)1. After the distribution required under paragraph (b), the remainder ~~During each calendar year, the remaining portion of the proceeds~~ shall be transferred to the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund. ~~Seventy percent of such proceeds shall be~~ and allocated in the same proportion as the allocation of total receipts of the half-cent sales tax under s. 218.61 and the emergency distribution under s. 218.65 in the prior state fiscal year. ~~Thirty percent of such proceeds shall be distributed pursuant to s. 218.67.~~

2. The proportion of the proceeds allocated based on the emergency distribution under s. 218.65 shall be distributed pursuant to s. 218.65.

3. In each calendar year, the proportion of the proceeds allocated based on the half-cent sales tax under s. 218.61 shall be allocated to each county in the same proportion as the county's percentage of total sales tax allocation for the prior state fiscal year and distributed pursuant to s. 218.62.

4. The department shall distribute the appropriate amount to each municipality and county each month at the same time that local communications services taxes are distributed pursuant to subsection (3).

Section 5. Paragraph (d) of subsection (6) of section 212.20, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

212.20 Funds collected, disposition; additional powers of department; operational expense; refund of taxes adjudicated



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unconstitutionally collected.—

(6) Distribution of all proceeds under this chapter and ss. 202.18(1)(b) and (2)(b) and 203.01(1)(a)3. is as follows:

(d) The proceeds of all other taxes and fees imposed pursuant to this chapter or remitted pursuant to s. 202.18(1)(b) and (2)(b) shall be distributed as follows:

1. In any fiscal year, the greater of \$500 million, minus an amount equal to 4.6 percent of the proceeds of the taxes collected pursuant to chapter 201, or 5.2 percent of all other taxes and fees imposed pursuant to this chapter or remitted pursuant to s. 202.18(1)(b) and (2)(b) shall be deposited in monthly installments into the General Revenue Fund.

2. After the distribution under subparagraph 1., 8.9744 percent of the amount remitted by a sales tax dealer located within a participating county pursuant to s. 218.61 shall be transferred into the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund. Beginning July 1, 2003, the amount to be transferred shall be reduced by 0.1 percent, and the department shall distribute this amount to the Public Employees Relations Commission Trust Fund less \$5,000 each month, which shall be added to the amount calculated in subparagraph 3. and distributed accordingly.

3. After the distribution under subparagraphs 1. and 2., 0.0966 percent shall be transferred to the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund and distributed pursuant to s. 218.65.

4. After the distributions under subparagraphs 1., 2., and 3., 2.0810 percent of the available proceeds shall be transferred monthly to the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for



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Counties pursuant to s. 218.215.

5. After the distributions under subparagraphs 1., 2., and 3., 1.3653 percent of the available proceeds shall be transferred monthly to the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Municipalities pursuant to s. 218.215. If the total revenue to be distributed pursuant to this subparagraph is at least as great as the amount due from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000, no municipality shall receive less than the amount due from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000. If the total proceeds to be distributed are less than the amount received in combination from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000, each municipality shall receive an amount proportionate to the amount it was due in state fiscal year 1999-2000.

6. After the distributions required under subparagraphs 1.-5., the greater of \$50 million or 0.1438 percent of the available proceeds shall be transferred in each fiscal year to fiscally constrained counties pursuant to s. 218.67.

7. Of the remaining proceeds:

a. In each fiscal year, the sum of \$29,915,500 shall be divided into as many equal parts as there are counties in the state, and one part shall be distributed to each county. The distribution among the several counties must begin each fiscal year on or before January 5th and continue monthly for a total of 4 months. If a local or special law required that any moneys



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accruing to a county in fiscal year 1999-2000 under the then-existing provisions of s. 550.135 be paid directly to the district school board, special district, or a municipal government, such payment must continue until the local or special law is amended or repealed. The state covenants with holders of bonds or other instruments of indebtedness issued by local governments, special districts, or district school boards before July 1, 2000, that it is not the intent of this subparagraph to adversely affect the rights of those holders or relieve local governments, special districts, or district school boards of the duty to meet their obligations as a result of previous pledges or assignments or trusts entered into which obligated funds received from the distribution to county governments under then-existing s. 550.135. This distribution specifically is in lieu of funds distributed under s. 550.135 before July 1, 2000.

b. The department shall distribute \$166,667 monthly to each applicant certified as a facility for a new or retained professional sports franchise pursuant to s. 288.1162. Up to \$41,667 shall be distributed monthly by the department to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11621 for a facility for a spring training franchise. However, not more than \$416,670 may be distributed monthly in the aggregate to all certified applicants for facilities for spring training franchises. Distributions begin 60 days after such certification and continue for not more than 30 years, except as otherwise provided in s. 288.11621. A certified applicant identified in this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in distributions than expended by the applicant for the public purposes provided in s.



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288.1162(5) or s. 288.11621(3).

c. The department shall distribute up to \$83,333 monthly to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by a single spring training franchise, or up to \$166,667 monthly to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by more than one spring training franchise. Monthly distributions begin 60 days after such certification or July 1, 2016, whichever is later, and continue for not more than 20 years to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by a single spring training franchise or not more than 25 years to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by more than one spring training franchise. A certified applicant identified in this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in distributions than expended by the applicant for the public purposes provided in s. 288.11631(3).

d. The department shall distribute \$15,333 monthly to the State Transportation Trust Fund.

e.(I) On or before July 25, 2021, August 25, 2021, and September 25, 2021, the department shall distribute \$324,533,334 in each of those months to the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, less an adjustment for refunds issued from the General Revenue Fund pursuant to s. 443.131(3)(e)3. before making the distribution. The adjustments made by the department to the total distributions shall be equal to the total refunds made pursuant to s. 443.131(3)(e)3. If the amount of refunds to be subtracted from any single distribution exceeds the distribution, the department may not make that distribution and must subtract the remaining balance from the next distribution.



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(II) Beginning July 2022, and on or before the 25th day of each month, the department shall distribute \$90 million monthly to the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.

(III) If the ending balance of the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund exceeds \$4,071,519,600 on the last day of any month, as determined from United States Department of the Treasury data, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall certify to the department that the ending balance of the trust fund exceeds such amount.

(IV) This sub-subparagraph is repealed, and the department shall end monthly distributions under sub-sub-subparagraph (II), on the date the department receives certification under sub-sub-subparagraph (III).

f. Beginning July 1, 2023, in each fiscal year, the department shall distribute \$27.5 million to the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust Fund under s. 571.26, for further distribution in accordance with s. 571.265.

~~8.7.~~ All other proceeds must remain in the General Revenue Fund.

Section 6. Paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section 215.971, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

215.971 Agreements funded with federal or state assistance.—

(1) An agency agreement that provides state financial assistance to a recipient or subrecipient, as those terms are defined in s. 215.97, or that provides federal financial assistance to a subrecipient, as defined by applicable United States Office of Management and Budget circulars, must include all of the following:



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(h)1. If the agency agreement provides federal or state financial assistance to a county or municipality that is a rural community or rural area of opportunity as those terms are defined in s. 288.0656(2), a provision allowing the agency to provide for the payment of invoices to the county, municipality, or rural area of opportunity as that term is defined in s. 288.0656(2), for verified and eligible performance that has been completed in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the agreement. This provision is not intended to require reimbursement to the county, municipality, or rural area of opportunity for invoices paid, but to allow the agency to provide for the payment of invoices due. The agency shall expedite such payment requests in order to facilitate the timely payment of invoices received by the county, municipality, or rural area of opportunity. This provision is included to alleviate the financial hardships that certain rural counties and municipalities encounter when administering agreements, and must be exercised by the agency when a county or municipality demonstrates financial hardship, to the extent that federal or state law, rule, or other regulation allows such payments. This paragraph may not be construed to alter or limit any other provisions of federal or state law, rule, or other regulation.

2. By August 1, 2026, and each year thereafter, each state agency shall report to the Office of Rural Prosperity summarizing the implementation of this paragraph for the preceding fiscal year. The Office of Rural Prosperity shall summarize the information received pursuant to this paragraph in its annual report as required in s. 288.013.

Section 7. Section 218.67, Florida Statutes, is amended to



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read:

218.67 Distribution for fiscally constrained counties.—

(1) Each county ~~that is entirely within a rural area of opportunity as designated by the Governor pursuant to s. 288.0656 or each county~~ for which the value of a mill will raise no more than \$10 ~~\$5~~ million in revenue, based on the taxable value certified pursuant to s. 1011.62(4)(a)1.a., from the previous July 1, shall be considered a fiscally constrained county.

(2) Each fiscally constrained county government that participates in the local government half-cent sales tax shall be eligible to receive an additional distribution ~~from the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund,~~ as provided in s. 212.20(6)(d)6. ~~s. 202.18(2)(c)1.,~~ in addition to its regular monthly distribution provided under this part and any emergency or supplemental distribution under s. 218.65.

(3) The amount to be distributed to each fiscally constrained county shall be determined by the Department of Revenue at the beginning of the fiscal year, using the prior fiscal year's sales and use tax collections from the most recent fiscal year that reports 12 months of collections ~~July 1 taxable value certified pursuant to s. 1011.62(4)(a)1.a., tax data,~~ population as defined in s. 218.21, and the most current calendar year per capita personal income published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the United States Department of Commerce ~~millage rate levied for the prior fiscal year.~~ The amount distributed shall be allocated based upon the following factors:

(a) The contribution-to-revenue ~~relative revenue-raising capacity~~ factor for each participating county shall equal 100



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multiplied by a quotient, the numerator of which is the county's population and the denominator of which is the state sales and use tax collections attributable to the county ~~be the ability of the eligible county to generate ad valorem revenues from 1 mill of taxation on a per capita basis. A county that raises no more than \$25 per capita from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 1; a county that raises more than \$25 but no more than \$30 per capita from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 0.75; and a county that raises more than \$30 but no more than \$50 per capita from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 0.5. No value shall be assigned to counties that raise more than \$50 per capita from 1 mill of ad valorem taxation.~~

(b) The personal-income local-effort factor shall equal a quotient, the numerator of which is the median per capita personal income of participating counties and the denominator of which is the county's per capita personal income ~~be a measure of the relative level of local effort of the eligible county as indicated by the millage rate levied for the prior fiscal year. The local-effort factor shall be the most recently adopted countywide operating millage rate for each eligible county multiplied by 0.1.~~

(c) Each eligible county's proportional allocation of the total amount available to be distributed to all of the eligible counties shall be in the same proportion as the sum of the county's two factors is to the sum of the two factors for all eligible counties. The proportional rate computation must be carried to the fifth decimal place, and the amount to distribute to each county must be rounded to the next whole dollar amount. The counties that are eligible to receive an allocation under



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this subsection and the amount available to be distributed to such counties do ~~shall~~ not include counties participating in the phaseout period under subsection (4) or the amounts they remain eligible to receive during the phaseout.

(4) For those counties that no longer qualify under the requirements of subsection (1) after the effective date of this act, there shall be a 2-year phaseout period. Beginning on July 1 of the year following the year in which the value of a mill for that county exceeds \$10 ~~\$5~~ million in revenue, the county shall receive two-thirds of the amount received in the prior year, and beginning on July 1 of the second year following the year in which the value of a mill for that county exceeds \$10 ~~\$5~~ million in revenue, the county shall receive one-third of the amount received in the last year that the county qualified as a fiscally constrained county. Following the 2-year phaseout period, the county is ~~shall~~ no longer ~~be~~ eligible to receive any distributions under this section unless the county can be considered a fiscally constrained county as provided in subsection (1).

(5)(a) The revenues received under this section must be allocated ~~may be used~~ by a county to be used for the following purposes:

1. Fifty percent for public safety, including salary expenditures for law enforcement officers or correctional officers, as those terms are defined in s. 943.10(1) and (2), respectively, firefighters as defined in s. 633.102, or emergency medical technicians or paramedics as those terms are defined in s. 401.23.

2. Thirty percent for infrastructure needs.



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3. Twenty percent for any public purpose.

(b) The revenues received under this section ~~any public purpose, except that such revenues~~ may not be used to pay debt service on bonds, notes, certificates of participation, or any other forms of indebtedness.

Section 8. Subsection (6) is added to section 288.0001, Florida Statutes, to read:

288.0001 Economic Development Programs Evaluation.—The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) shall develop and present to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the chairs of the legislative appropriations committees the Economic Development Programs Evaluation.

(6) (a) The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and OPPAGA shall prepare a report on the impact of the Florida Statutes on rural communities. Specifically, the report must include the following:

1. A review of definitions in the Florida Statutes of terms such as "rural community," "rural area of opportunity," and other similar terms used to define rural areas of this state, including population-based references, to assess the adequacy of the current statutory framework in defining these areas. The analysis must include, but need not be limited to:

a. Evaluation of whether current provisions properly distinguish these communities or areas from more urban and suburban parts of this state;

b. Consideration of updates to the definitions and references to classify additional rural areas, such as growing



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communities, unincorporated areas, or rural communities by design; and

c. Study of appropriate metrics to be used to describe rural communities or areas, such as population, geographic, demographic, or other metrics, or combinations thereof.

2. A survey of local governments meeting the statutory definition of "rural community" or "rural area of opportunity" to assess the benefits to the local government of being identified as such and any perceived unmet needs in the implementation of current statutory provisions designed to support rural communities or areas.

3. An analysis of state grant programs and recurring appropriations that explicitly benefit rural communities or areas, including, but not limited to, program purpose, funding amounts, participation rates, and consistency with peer-reviewed studies on effective economic programs for these areas.

(b) Upon request, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and OPPAGA must be provided with all data necessary to complete the report, including any confidential data, by any entity with information related to this review. The offices may collaborate on all data collection and analysis.

(c) The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and OPPAGA shall submit a report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 31, 2025. The report must provide recommendations to address any findings, including any changes in statutory definitions or references to rural communities or areas, opportunities to enhance state support to rural communities or areas, outcome measures or other criteria that may be used to examine the



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effectiveness of state grant programs for rural communities or areas, and adjustments to program design, including changes to increase participation in state grant programs for rural communities or areas.

(d) This subsection expires July 1, 2026.

Section 9. Present paragraphs (d) and (e) of subsection (7) of section 288.001, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as paragraphs (e) and (f), respectively, and a new paragraph (d) is added to that subsection, to read:

288.001 The Florida Small Business Development Center Network.—

(7) ADDITIONAL STATE FUNDS; USES; PAY-PER-PERFORMANCE INCENTIVES; STATEWIDE SERVICE; SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS; BEST PRACTICES; ELIGIBILITY.—

(d) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), (b), and (c), the network shall use funds directly appropriated for the specific purpose of expanding service in rural communities, as defined in s. 288.0656, in addition to any funds allocated by the network from other sources. The network shall use the funds to develop an activity plan focused on network consultants and resources in rural communities. In collaboration with regional economic development organizations as defined in s. 288.018, the plan must provide for either full- or part-time consultants to be available for at least 20 hours per week in rural areas or be permanently stationed in rural areas. This may include establishing a circuit in specific rural locations to ensure the consultants' availability on a regular basis. By using the funds to create a regular presence in rural areas, the network can strengthen community collaboration, raise awareness of available



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resources to provide opportunities for new business development or existing business growth, and make professional experience, education, and business information available in these essential communities. The network may dedicate funds to facilitate local or regional events that focus on small business topics, provide consulting services, and leverage partner organizations, such as the regional economic development organizations, local workforce development boards as described in s. 445.07, and Florida College System institutions.

Section 10. Section 288.007, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

288.007 Inventory of communities seeking to recruit businesses.—By September 30 of each year, a county or municipality that has a population of at least 25,000 or its local economic development organization, and each local government within a rural area of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656 or its local economic development organization, shall ~~must~~ submit to the department a brief overview of the strengths, services, and economic development incentives that its community offers. The local government or its local economic development organization also shall ~~must~~ identify any industries that it is encouraging to locate or relocate to its area. Unless otherwise required pursuant to this section, a county or municipality having a population of 25,000 or less ~~fewer~~ or its local economic development organization seeking to recruit businesses may submit information as required in this section and may participate in any activity or initiative resulting from the collection, analysis, and reporting of the information to the department pursuant to this section.



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Section 11. Section 288.013, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

288.013 Office of Rural Prosperity.—

(1) The Legislature finds that the unique characteristics and nature of the rural communities in this state are integral to making this state an attractive place to visit, work, and live. Further, the Legislature finds that building a prosperous rural economy and vibrant rural communities is in the best interest of this state. Rural prosperity is integral to supporting this state's infrastructure, housing, and agricultural and food-processing needs, as well as promoting the health and advancement of the overall economy of this state. It is of importance to the state that its rural areas are able to grow, whether locally or in regional partnerships. To better serve rural communities, and in recognition of rural Florida's unique challenges and opportunities, the Office of Rural Prosperity is established to ensure these efforts are coordinated, focused, and effective.

(2) The Office of Rural Prosperity is created within the Department of Commerce for the purpose of supporting rural communities by helping rural stakeholders navigate available programs and resources and representing rural interests across state government.

(3) The Governor shall appoint a director to lead the office, subject to confirmation by the Senate. The director shall report to the secretary of the department and shall serve at the pleasure of the secretary.

(4) The office shall do all of the following:

(a) Serve as the state's point of contact for rural local



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governments.

(b) Administer the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) pursuant to s. 288.0656.

(c) Provide training and technical assistance to rural local governments on a broad range of community and economic development activities. The training and technical assistance may be offered using communications technology or in person and must be recorded and posted to the office's website. The training and technical assistance must include, at a minimum, the following topics:

1. How to access state and federal resources, including training on the online rural resource directory required under paragraph (d).

2. Best practices relating to comprehensive planning, economic development, and land development in rural communities.

3. Strategies to address management and administrative capacity challenges unique to rural local governments.

4. Requirements of, and updates on recent changes to, the Community Planning Act under s. 163.3161.

5. Updates on other recent state and federal laws affecting rural local governments.

(d) Create and maintain an online rural resource directory to serve as an interactive tool to navigate the various state and federal resources, tools, and services available to rural local governments. The office shall regularly maintain the resource directory and, to the greatest extent possible, include up-to-date information on state and federal programs, resources, tools, and services that address the needs of rural communities in all areas of governance. Each state agency shall routinely



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provide information and updates to the office for maintenance of the resource directory. The resource directory must allow users to search by indicators, such as agency name, resource type, or topic, and include a notification function to allow users to receive alerts when new or modified resources are available. To the greatest extent possible, the resource directory must include information on financial match requirements for the state and federal programs listed in the directory.

(5)(a) By October 1, 2025, the office shall establish and staff seven regional rural community liaison centers across this state for the purpose of providing specialized in-person state support to local governments in rural areas of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656. The department shall by rule divide this state into seven regions and assign a regional rural community liaison center to each region. Each liaison center shall support the local governments within its geographic territory and shall be staffed with at least two full-time department personnel. At a minimum, liaison centers shall have the following powers, duties, and functions:

1. Work with local governments to plan and achieve goals for local or regional growth, economic development, and rural prosperity.

2. Facilitate local government access to state and federal resources, such as grants, loans, and other aid or resources.

3. Advise local governments on available waivers of program requirements, including financial match waivers or reductions, for projects using state or federal funds through the Rural Economic Development Initiative under s. 288.0656.

4. Coordinate local government technical assistance needs



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with the department and other state or federal agencies.

5. Promote model ordinances, policies, and strategies related to economic development.

6. Assist local governments with regulatory and reporting compliance.

(b) To the greatest extent possible, the regional rural community liaison centers shall coordinate with local and regional governmental entities, regional economic development organizations as defined in s. 288.018, and other appropriate entities to establish a network to foster community-driven solutions that promote viable and sustainable rural communities.

(c) The regional rural community liaison centers shall regularly engage with the Rural Economic Development Initiative established in s. 288.0656, and at least one staff member from each liaison center shall attend, either in person or by means of electronic communication, the monthly meetings required by s. 288.0656(6)(c).

(6) By December 1, 2025, and each year thereafter, the director of the office shall submit to the Administration Commission in the Executive Office of the Governor a written report describing the office's operations and accomplishments for the preceding year, inclusive of the Rural Economic Development Initiative report required by s. 288.0656(8). In consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the office shall also include in the annual report recommendations for policies, programs, and funding to further support the needs of rural communities in this state. The office shall submit the annual report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of



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each year and publish the annual report on the office's website.
The director shall present, in person at the next scheduled
Administration Commission meeting, detailed information from the
annual report required by this subsection.

(7)(a) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government
Accountability (OPPAGA) shall review the effectiveness of the
office by December 15, 2026, and each year thereafter until
2028. Beginning in 2029, OPPAGA shall review and evaluate the
office every 3 years and shall submit a report based on its
findings. Each report must recommend policy and statutory
modifications for consideration by the Legislature. OPPAGA shall
submit each report to the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to the
schedule.

(b) OPPAGA shall review strategies implemented by other
states on rural community preservation, enhancement, and
revitalization and report on their effectiveness and potential
for implementation in this state. OPPAGA shall include its
findings in its report to the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2027,
and every 3 years thereafter.

(c)1. OPPAGA shall review each state-funded or state-
administered grant and loan program available to local
governments to:

a. Identify any specified local government financial match
requirements and whether any portion of a match may be waived or
is required to be waived, pursuant to law, and programs where a
financial match waiver may be appropriate for rural local
government applicants, if not contemplated by law.



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b. Identify grant and loan application evaluation criteria, including scoring procedures, for programs that may be perceived to be overly burdensome for rural local government applicants, and whether special accommodations or preferences for rural local governments may be appropriate.

2. OPPAGA shall produce a report based on its review and submit the report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2026.

3. This paragraph expires June 30, 2027.

Section 12. Section 288.014, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

288.014 Renaissance Grants Program.—

(1) The Legislature finds that it has traditionally provided programs to assist rural communities with economic development and enhance their ability to attract businesses and that, by providing that extra component of economic viability, rural communities are able to attract new businesses and grow existing ones. However, the Legislature finds that a subset of rural communities has decreased in population over the past decade, contributing to a decline in local business activity and economic development. The Legislature further finds that the state must transform its assistance to these specific rural communities to help them achieve a necessary precursor of economic viability. The Legislature further finds that the approach intended by the creation of renaissance grants is to focus on reversing the economic deterioration in rural communities by retaining and attracting residents by giving them a reason to stay, which is the impetus of natural economic growth, business opportunities, and increased quality of life.



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(2) The Office of Rural Prosperity within the department shall administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block grants to eligible counties. By October 1, 2025, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall certify to the Office of Rural Prosperity which counties are growth-impeded. For the purposes of this section, "growth-impeded" means a county that, as of the most recent population estimate, has had a declining population over the last 10 years. After an initial certification, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall annually certify whether the county remains growth-impeded, until the county has 3 consecutive years of population growth. Upon such certification of population growth, the county is eligible to participate in the program for 1 additional year in order for the county to prepare for the end of block grant funding.

(3) (a) Each participating county shall enter into an agreement with the Office of Rural Prosperity to receive the block grant. Each county has broad authority to design its specific plan to achieve population growth within the broad parameters identified in this section. The Office of Rural Prosperity may not determine the manner in which the county implements the block grant. However, regional rural community liaison center staff shall provide assistance in developing the county's plan, upon request.

(b) Each participating county shall report annually to the Office of Rural Prosperity on activities undertaken, intergovernmental agreements entered into, and other information as required by the office.

(c) Each participating county shall receive \$1 million from



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the funds appropriated to the program. Counties participating in the program shall make all attempts to limit expenses for administrative costs, consistent with the need for prudent management and accountability in the use of public funds. Each county may contribute other funds for block grant purposes, including local, state, or federal grant funds, or seek out in-kind or financial contributions from private or public sources to assist in fulfilling the activities undertaken.

(4)(a) A participating county shall hire and retain a renaissance coordinator and may use block grant funds for this purpose. The renaissance coordinator is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that block grant funds are used as provided in this section;

2. Coordinating with other local governments, school boards, Florida College System institutions, or other entities; and

3. Reporting as necessary to the state, including information necessary pursuant to subsection (7).

(b) The Office of Rural Prosperity regional rural community liaison center staff shall provide assistance, upon request, and training to the renaissance coordinator to ensure successful implementation of the block grant.

(5) A participating county shall design a plan to make targeted investments in the community to achieve population growth and increase the economic vitality of the community. The plan must include the following key features for use of the state support:

(a) Technology centers with extended hours located within schools or on school premises, administered by the local school



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board, for such schools which provide extended hours and support for access by students.

(b) Facilities that colocate adult day care with child care facilities. The site-sharing facilities must be managed to also provide opportunities for direct interaction between generations and increase the health and well-being of both younger and older participants, reduce social isolation, and create cost and time efficiencies for working family members. The regional rural community liaison center staff of the Office of Rural Prosperity shall assist the county, upon request, with bringing to the Rural Economic Development Initiative or directly to the appropriate state agency recommendations necessary to streamline any required state permits, licenses, regulations, or other requirements.

(c) Technology labs managed in agreement with the nearest Florida College System institution or a career center as established under s. 1001.44. Repurposing vacant industrial sites or existing office space must be given priority in the selection of lab locations. Each local technology lab must be staffed and open for extended hours with the capacity to provide:

1. Access to trainers and equipment necessary for users to earn various certificates or online degrees in technology;

2. Hands-on assistance with applying for appropriate remote work opportunities; and

3. Studio space with equipment for graduates and other qualifying residents to perform remote work that is based on the use of technology. Collaboration with community partners, including the local workforce development board as described in



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s. 445.007, to provide training opportunities, in-kind support such as transportation to and from the lab, financing of equipment for in-home use, or basic maintenance of such equipment is required.

(6) In addition to the hiring of a renaissance coordinator, a participating county shall develop intergovernmental agreements for shared responsibilities with its municipalities, school board, and Florida College System institution or career center and enter into necessary contracts with providers and community partners in order to implement the plan.

(7)(a) Every 2 years, the Auditor General shall conduct an operational audit as defined in s. 11.45 of each county's grant activities, beginning in 2026.

(b) On December 31, 2026, and every year thereafter, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall submit an annual report of renaissance block grant recipients by county to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The report must provide key economic indicators that measure progress in altering longer-term trends in the county. The Office of Rural Prosperity shall provide the Office of Economic and Demographic Research with information as requested to complete the report.

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

(9) This section expires June 30, 2040.

Section 13. Section 288.0175, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

288.0175 Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program.—



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(1) The Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program is established within the Office of Rural Prosperity within the department to fund and support the development of public infrastructure smart technology projects in communities located in rural areas of opportunity, subject to legislative appropriation.

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

(a) "Public infrastructure smart technology" means systems and applications that use connectivity, data analytics, and automation to improve public infrastructure by increasing efficiency, enhancing public services, and promoting sustainable development.

(b) "Rural area of opportunity" has the same meaning as in s. 288.0656.

(c) "Smart technology lead organization" means a not-for-profit corporation organized under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code which has been in existence for at least 3 years and specializes in smart region planning.

(3) (a) The Office of Rural Prosperity shall contract with one or more smart technology lead organizations to administer the grant program for the purpose of deploying public infrastructure smart technology in rural communities. In accordance with the terms required by the office, the smart technology lead organization shall provide grants to counties and municipalities located within a rural area of opportunity for public infrastructure smart technology projects.

(b) The office's contract with a smart technology lead organization must specify the contract deliverables, including financial reports and other reports due the office, timeframes



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for achieving contractual obligations, and any other requirements the office determines are necessary. The contract must require the smart technology lead organization to do the following:

1. Collaborate with counties and municipalities located in rural areas of opportunity to identify opportunities for local governments to institute cost-effective smart technology solutions for improving public services and infrastructure.

2. Provide technical assistance to counties and municipalities located in rural areas of opportunity in developing plans for public infrastructure smart technology projects.

3. Assist counties and municipalities located in rural areas of opportunity in connecting with other communities, companies, and other entities to leverage the impact of each public infrastructure smart technology project.

(4) The office shall include in its annual report required by s. 288.013(6) a description of the projects funded under this section.

Section 14. Subsections (1), (2), and (4) of section 288.018, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

(1)(a) For the purposes of this section, the term “regional economic development organization” means an economic development organization located in or contracted to serve a rural area of opportunity, as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(2)(d)~~.

(b) Subject to appropriation, the Office of Rural Prosperity ~~department~~ shall establish a grant program to provide funding to regional economic development organizations for the



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purpose of building the professional capacity of those organizations. Building the professional capacity of a regional economic development organization includes hiring professional staff to develop, deliver, and provide needed economic development professional services, including technical assistance, education and leadership development, marketing, and project recruitment. Grants may also be used by a regional economic development organization to provide technical assistance to local governments, local economic development organizations, and existing and prospective businesses.

(c) A regional economic development organization may apply annually to the office department for a grant. The office department is authorized to approve, on an annual basis, grants to such regional economic development organizations. The office may award a maximum amount of \$50,000 in a year to ~~maximum amount~~ an organization may receive in any year will be \$50,000, or \$250,000 each to for any three regional economic development organizations that serve an entire region of a rural area of opportunity designated pursuant to s. 288.0656(7) if they are recognized by the office department as serving such a region.

(2) In approving the participants, the office department shall require the following:

(a) Documentation of official commitments of support from each of the units of local government represented by the regional organization.

(b) Demonstration that the organization is in existence and actively involved in economic development activities serving the region.

(c) Demonstration of the manner in which the organization



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is or will coordinate its efforts with those of other local and state organizations.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in the General Appropriations Act, the department may expend up to \$750,000 each fiscal year from funds appropriated ~~to the Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund~~ for the purposes outlined in this section.

Section 15. Section 288.019, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

288.019 Rural considerations in grant review and evaluation processes; financial match waiver or reduction.—

(1) Notwithstanding any other law, and to the fullest extent possible, each agency and organization ~~the member agencies and organizations~~ of the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(6)(a)~~ shall review:

(a) All grant and loan application evaluation criteria and scoring procedures to ensure the fullest access for rural communities ~~counties~~ as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(2)~~ to resources available throughout the state; and

(b) The financial match requirements for projects in rural communities.

(2) ~~(1)~~ Each REDI agency and organization shall consider the impact on and ability of rural communities to meet and be competitive under such criteria, scoring, and requirements. Upon review, each REDI agency and organization shall ~~review all evaluation and scoring procedures and develop a proposal for~~ modifications to those procedures which minimize the financial and resource impact to a rural community, including waiver or



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997 reduction of any required financial match requirements ~~impact of~~
998 ~~a project within a rural area.~~

999 (a)(2) Evaluation criteria and scoring procedures must
1000 provide for an appropriate ranking, when ranking is a component
1001 of the program, based on the proportionate impact that projects
1002 have on a rural area when compared with similar project impacts
1003 on an urban area. Additionally,

1004 ~~(3)~~ evaluation criteria and scoring procedures must
1005 recognize the disparity of available fiscal resources for an
1006 equal level of financial support from an urban county or
1007 municipality and a rural county or municipality.

1008 ~~(a)~~ The evaluation criteria should weight contribution in
1009 proportion to the amount of funding available at the local
1010 level.

1011 (b) Match requirements must be waived or reduced for rural
1012 communities. When appropriate, an in-kind match must ~~should~~ be
1013 allowed and applied as a financial match when a rural community
1014 ~~county~~ is experiencing economic financial distress as defined in
1015 s. 288.0656 through elevated unemployment at a rate in excess of
1016 ~~the state's average by 5 percentage points or because of the~~
1017 ~~loss of its ad valorem base.~~ Donations of land, though usually
1018 not recognized as an in-kind match, may be treated as such. As
1019 appropriate, each agency and organization that applies for or
1020 receives federal funding must request federal approval to waive
1021 or reduce the financial match requirements, if any, for projects
1022 in rural communities.

1023 ~~(3)(4)~~ For existing programs, The proposal ~~modified~~
1024 ~~evaluation criteria and scoring procedure~~ must be submitted
1025 ~~delivered~~ to the Office of Rural Prosperity ~~department~~ for



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distribution to the REDI agencies and organizations. The REDI agencies and organizations shall review and make comments and recommendations that. ~~Future rules, programs, evaluation criteria, and scoring processes must be brought before a REDI meeting for review, discussion, and recommendation to allow~~ rural communities ~~counties~~ fuller access to the state's resources.

(4) Each REDI agency and organization shall ensure that related administrative rules or policies are modified, as necessary, to reflect the finalized proposal and that information about the authorized wavier or reduction is included in the online rural resource directory of the Office of Rural Prosperity required in s. 288.013(4)(d).

(5) The rural liaison from the related regional district shall assist the rural community to make requests of waiver or reduction of match.

Section 16. Subsection (3) is added to section 288.021, Florida Statutes, to read:

288.021 Economic development liaison.—

(3) When practicable, the staff member appointed as the economic development liaison shall also serve as the agency representative for the Rural Economic Development Initiative pursuant to s. 288.0656.

Section 17. Section 288.065, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

288.065 Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund.—

(1) The Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund Program is established within the Office of Rural Prosperity ~~department~~ to facilitate the use of existing federal, state, and



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local financial resources by providing local governments with financial assistance to further promote the economic viability of rural communities. These funds may be used to finance initiatives directed toward maintaining or developing the economic base of rural communities, especially initiatives addressing employment opportunities for residents of these communities.

(2)(a) The program shall provide for long-term loans, loan guarantees, and loan loss reserves to units of local governments, or economic development organizations substantially underwritten by a unit of local government.

(b) For purposes of this section, the term "unit of local government" means:

1. A county ~~within counties~~ with a population ~~populations~~ of 75,000 or less. ~~fewer, or within any~~

2. A county with a population of 125,000 or less ~~fewer~~ which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or less. ~~fewer~~

3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.

4. A county or municipality within a rural area of opportunity.

For purposes of this paragraph, population is determined in accordance with the most recent official estimates pursuant to s. 186.901 and must include those residing in incorporated and unincorporated areas of a county, ~~based on the most recent official population estimate as determined under s. 186.901, including those residing in incorporated areas and those~~



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~~residing in unincorporated areas of the county, or to units of local government, or economic development organizations substantially underwritten by a unit of local government, within a rural area of opportunity.~~

~~(c)(b)~~ Requests for loans must ~~shall~~ be made by application to the office ~~department~~. Loans must ~~shall~~ be made pursuant to agreements specifying the terms and conditions agreed to between the applicant and the department. The loans are ~~shall be~~ the legal obligations of the applicant.

~~(d)(e)~~ All repayments of principal and interest shall be returned to the loan fund and made available for loans to other applicants. However, in a rural area of opportunity designated under s. 288.0656 ~~by the Governor~~, and upon approval by the office ~~department~~, repayments of principal and interest may be retained by the applicant if such repayments are dedicated and matched to fund regionally based economic development organizations representing the rural area of opportunity.

(3) The office ~~department~~ shall manage the fund, establishing loan practices that must include, but are not limited to, procedures for establishing loan interest rates, uses of funding, application procedures, and application review procedures. The office has ~~department shall have~~ final approval authority for any loan under this section.

(4) Notwithstanding ~~the provisions of~~ s. 216.301, funds appropriated for this loan fund may ~~purpose shall~~ not be subject to reversion.

(5) The office shall include in its annual report required under s. 288.013 detailed information about the fund, including loans made during the previous fiscal year, loans active, loans



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terminated or repaid, and the amount of funds not obligated as
of 14 days before the date the report is due.

Section 18. Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of section
288.0655, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (6) is
added to that section, to read:

288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

(1) There is created within the Office of Rural Prosperity
~~department~~ the Rural Infrastructure Fund to facilitate the
planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in
rural communities which will encourage job creation, capital
investment, and the strengthening and diversification of rural
economies by promoting tourism, trade, and economic development.
Grants under this program may be awarded to a unit of local
government within a rural community or rural area of opportunity
as defined in s. 288.0656; or to a regional economic development
organization, a unit of local government, or an economic
development organization substantially underwritten by a unit of
local government for an infrastructure project located within an
unincorporated area that has a population of 15,000 or less, has
been in existence for 100 year or more, is contiguous to a rural
community, and has been adversely affected by a natural disaster
or presents a unique economic development opportunity of
regional impact.

(2)(a) Funds appropriated by the Legislature shall be
distributed by the office ~~department~~ through grant programs that
maximize the use of federal, local, and private resources,
including, but not limited to, those available under the Small
Cities Community Development Block Grant Program.

(b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural



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1142 areas of opportunity as defined by the Rural Economic
1143 Development Initiative to infrastructure funding programs of the
1144 Federal Government, such as those offered by the United States
1145 Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of
1146 Commerce, and state programs, including those offered by Rural
1147 Economic Development Initiative agencies, and to facilitate
1148 local government or private infrastructure funding efforts, the
1149 office ~~department~~ may award grants for up to 75 percent of the
1150 total infrastructure project cost, or up to 100 percent of the
1151 total infrastructure project cost for a project located in a
1152 rural community as defined in s. 288.0656(2) which is also
1153 located in a fiscally constrained county as defined in s.
1154 218.67(1) or a rural area of opportunity as defined in s.
1155 288.0656(2). Eligible uses of funds may include improving any
1156 inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action
1157 that prohibits economic or community growth and reducing the
1158 costs to community users of proposed infrastructure improvements
1159 that exceed such costs in comparable communities. Eligible uses
1160 of funds include improvements to public infrastructure for
1161 industrial or commercial sites and upgrades to or development of
1162 public tourism infrastructure. Authorized infrastructure may
1163 include the following public or public-private partnership
1164 facilities: storm water systems; telecommunications facilities;
1165 roads or other remedies to transportation impediments; nature-
1166 based tourism facilities; or other physical requirements
1167 necessary to facilitate tourism, trade, and economic development
1168 activities in the community. Authorized infrastructure may also
1169 include publicly or privately owned self-powered nature-based
1170 tourism facilities, publicly owned telecommunications



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facilities, and additions to the distribution facilities of the existing natural gas utility as defined in s. 366.04(3)(c), the existing electric utility as defined in s. 366.02, or the existing water or wastewater utility as defined in s. 367.021(12), or any other existing water or wastewater facility, which owns a gas or electric distribution system or a water or wastewater system in this state when:

1. A contribution-in-aid of construction is required to serve public or public-private partnership facilities under the tariffs of any natural gas, electric, water, or wastewater utility as defined herein; and

2. Such utilities as defined herein are willing and able to provide such service.

(c) The office ~~department~~ may award grants of up to \$300,000 for infrastructure feasibility studies, design and engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and preparation or site readiness activities. Site readiness expenses may include clearing title, surveys, permitting, environmental studies, and regulatory compliance costs. Grants awarded under this paragraph may be used in conjunction with grants awarded under paragraph (b). In evaluating applications under this paragraph, the office ~~department~~ shall consider the extent to which the application seeks to minimize administrative and consultant expenses.

(d) The office ~~department~~ shall participate in a memorandum of agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture under which state funds available through the Rural Infrastructure Fund may be advanced, in excess of the prescribed state share, for a project that has received from the United



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States Department of Agriculture a preliminary determination of eligibility for federal financial support. State funds in excess of the prescribed state share which are advanced pursuant to this paragraph and the memorandum of agreement shall be reimbursed when funds are awarded under an application for federal funding.

(e) To enable local governments to access the resources available pursuant to s. 403.973(17), the office department may award grants for surveys, feasibility studies, and other activities related to the identification and preclearance review of land which is suitable for preclearance review. Authorized grants under this paragraph may not exceed \$75,000 each, except in the case of a project in a rural area of opportunity, in which case the grant may not exceed \$300,000. Any funds awarded under this paragraph must be matched at a level of 50 percent with local funds, except that any funds awarded for a project in a rural area of opportunity do not require a match of local funds. ~~If an application for funding is for a catalyst site, as defined in s. 288.0656, the requirement for local match may be waived pursuant to the process in s. 288.06561.~~ In evaluating applications under this paragraph, the office department shall consider the extent to which the application seeks to minimize administrative and consultant expenses.

(3) The office department, in consultation with the Department of Transportation ~~Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation~~, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, as appropriate, shall review and certify applications pursuant to s. 288.061. The review must include an evaluation of the



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economic benefit and long-term viability. The office has
~~department shall have~~ final approval for any grant under this
section.

(6) The office shall include in its annual report required
under s. 288.013 detailed information about the fund, including
grants made for the year, grants active, grants terminated or
complete, and the amount of funds not obligated as of 14 days
before the date the report is due.

Section 19. Subsection (1), paragraphs (a), (b), and (e) of
subsection (2), subsections (3) and (6), paragraph (c) of
subsection (7), and subsection (8) of section 288.0656, Florida
Statutes, are 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 economies, specifically in terms of
personal income, job creation, average wages, and strong tax
bases, it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage and
facilitate the location and expansion of major economic
development projects of significant scale in such rural
communities. The Legislature finds that rural communities are
the essential conduits for the economy's distribution,
manufacturing, and food supply.

(b) The Rural Economic Development Initiative, known as
"REDI," is created within the Office of Rural Prosperity
~~department~~, and all the participation of state and regional
agencies listed in paragraph (6)(a) shall participate in this
~~initiative is authorized.~~

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



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

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

~~(c)(e)~~ "Rural community" means:

1. A county with a population of 75,000 or less ~~fewer~~.
2. A county with a population of 125,000 or less ~~fewer~~ which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or less ~~fewer~~.
3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.
4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or less ~~fewer~~ and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in paragraph (a) ~~paragraph (e)~~ and verified by the department.

For purposes of this paragraph, population shall be determined



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in accordance with the most recent official estimate pursuant to
s. 186.901.

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

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

1. The Department of Transportation.
2. The Department of Environmental Protection.
3. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
4. The Department of State.
5. The Department of Health.
6. The Department of Children and Families.
7. The Department of Corrections.
8. The Department of Education.
9. The Department of Juvenile Justice.
10. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
11. Each water management district.
12. CareerSource Florida, Inc.
13. VISIT Florida.



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14. The Florida Regional Planning Council Association.

15. The Agency for Health Care Administration.

16. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

(b) An alternate for each designee must ~~shall~~ also be chosen, who must also be a deputy secretary or higher-level staff person, and the names of the designees and alternates must ~~shall~~ be reported sent to the director of the Office of Rural Prosperity. At least one rural liaison from each regional rural community liaison center must participate in the REDI meetings Secretary of Commerce.

(c) REDI shall meet at least each month, but may meet more often as necessary. Each REDI representative, or his or her designee, shall be physically present or available by means of electronic communication for each meeting.

(d) ~~(b)~~ Each REDI representative must have comprehensive knowledge of his or her agency's functions, both regulatory and service in nature, and of the state's economic goals, policies, and programs. This person shall be the primary point of contact for his or her agency with REDI on issues and projects relating to ~~economically distressed~~ rural communities and with regard to expediting project review, shall ensure a prompt effective response to problems arising with regard to rural issues, and shall work closely with the other REDI representatives in the identification of opportunities for preferential awards of program funds, contractual or other agreement provisions which meet the requirements of s. 215.971, and allowances and waiver of program requirements when necessary to encourage and facilitate ~~long-term private~~ capital investment and job creation.



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1345 ~~(e)-(e)~~ The REDI representatives shall work with REDI in the
1346 review and evaluation of statutes and rules for adverse impact
1347 on rural communities and the development of alternative
1348 proposals to mitigate that impact.

1349 ~~(f)-(d)~~ Each REDI representative shall be responsible for
1350 ensuring that each district office or facility of his or her
1351 agency is informed quarterly about the Rural Economic
1352 Development Initiative and for providing assistance throughout
1353 the agency in the implementation of REDI activities.

1354 (7)

1355 ~~(c) Each rural area of opportunity may designate catalyst~~
1356 ~~projects, provided that each catalyst project is specifically~~
1357 ~~recommended by REDI and confirmed as a catalyst project by the~~
1358 ~~department. All state agencies and departments shall use all~~
1359 ~~available tools and resources to the extent permissible by law~~
1360 ~~to promote the creation and development of each catalyst project~~
1361 ~~and the development of catalyst sites.~~

1362 (8) REDI shall submit a report to the Office of Rural
1363 Prosperity ~~department~~ on all REDI activities for the previous
1364 fiscal year as a supplement to the office's ~~department's~~ annual
1365 report required under s. 288.013 ~~s. 20.60~~. This supplementary
1366 report must include:

1367 (a) A status report on every project ~~all projects~~ currently
1368 being coordinated through REDI, the number of preferential
1369 awards and allowances made pursuant to this section in detail by
1370 award, allowance, or match type, the dollar amount of such
1371 awards, and the names of the recipients.

1372 (b) A description of all waivers of program requirements
1373 granted, including a list by program of each waiver that was



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granted. If waivers were requested but were not granted, a list of ungranted waivers, including reasons why the waivers were not granted, must be included.

(c) Detailed information as to the economic impact of the projects coordinated by REDI.

(d) Recommendations based on the review and evaluation of statutes and rules having an adverse impact on rural communities and proposals to mitigate such adverse impacts.

(e) Legislative recommendations for statutory waivers or reductions of specified economic development program requirements, including financial match waivers or reductions, for applicants within rural areas of opportunity.

(f) Outcomes of proposals submitted pursuant to s. 288.019.
Section 20. Section 288.06561, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 21. Subsections (2), (3), and (4) of section 288.0657, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

288.0657 Florida rural economic development strategy grants.—

(2) The Office of Rural Prosperity shall provide ~~department may accept and administer moneys appropriated to the department for providing~~ grants to assist rural communities to develop and implement strategic economic development plans. Grants may be provided to assist with costs associated with marketing a site to business and site selectors for an economic development project that is part of an economic development plan, either as part of funding to develop and implement a plan or related to an already adopted plan.

(3) A rural community, an economic development organization



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in a rural area, or a regional organization representing at least one rural community or such economic development organizations may apply for such grants. The rural liaison for the rural community shall assist those applying for such grants.

(4) The office ~~department~~ shall establish criteria for reviewing grant applications. These criteria must ~~shall~~ include, but are not limited to, the degree of participation and commitment by the local community and the application's consistency with local comprehensive plans or the application's proposal to ensure such consistency. Grants for marketing may include funding for advertising campaign materials and costs associated with meetings, trade missions, and professional development affiliated with site preparation and marketing. The office ~~department~~ shall review each application for a grant. ~~The department may approve grants only to the extent that funds are appropriated for such grants by the Legislature.~~

Section 22. Paragraph (a) of subsection (13) of section 288.1226, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

288.1226 Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation; use of property; board of directors; duties; audit.—

(13) FOUR-YEAR MARKETING PLAN.—

(a) The corporation shall, in collaboration with the department, develop a 4-year marketing plan. At a minimum, the marketing plan must discuss the following:

1. Continuation of overall tourism growth in this state.
2. Expansion to new or under-represented tourist markets.
3. Maintenance of traditional and loyal tourist markets.
4. Coordination of efforts with county destination marketing organizations, other local government marketing



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groups, privately owned attractions and destinations, and other private sector partners to create a seamless, four-season advertising campaign for the state and its regions.

5. Development of innovative techniques or promotions to build repeat visitation by targeted segments of the tourist population.

6. Consideration of innovative sources of state funding for tourism marketing.

7. Promotion of nature-based tourism, including, but not limited to, promotion of the Florida Greenways and Trails System as described under s. 260.014 and the Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail Network as described under s. 339.81.

8. Coordination of efforts with the Office of Greenways and Trails of the Department of Environmental Protection and the department to promote and assist local communities, including, but not limited to, communities designated as trail towns by the Office of Greenways and Trails, to maximize use of nearby trails as economic assets, including specific promotion of trail-based tourism.

9. Promotion of heritage tourism.

10. Development of a component to address emergency response to natural and manmade disasters from a marketing standpoint.

11. Provision of appropriate marketing assistance resources to small, rural, and agritourism businesses located in this state. Such resources may include, but are not limited to, marketing plans, marketing assistance, promotional support, media development, technical expertise, marketing advice, technology training, and social marketing support.



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Section 23. Section 288.12266, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 24. Paragraph (f) of subsection (2) and paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of subsection (4) of section 288.9961, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsections (6) and (7) are added to that section, to read:

288.9961 Promotion of broadband adoption; Florida Office of Broadband.—

(2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(f) “Underserved” means a geographic area of this state in which there is no provider of broadband Internet service that offers a connection to the Internet with a capacity for transmission at a consistent speed of at least 100 megabits per second downstream and at least 20 ~~10~~ megabits per second upstream.

(4) FLORIDA OFFICE OF BROADBAND.—The Florida Office of Broadband is created within the Division of Community Development in the department for the purpose of developing, marketing, and promoting broadband Internet services in this state. The office, in the performance of its duties, shall do all of the following:

(a) Create a strategic plan that has goals and strategies for increasing and improving the availability of, access to, and use of broadband Internet service in this state. In development of the plan, the department shall incorporate applicable federal broadband activities, including any efforts or initiatives of the Federal Communications Commission, to improve broadband Internet service in this state. The plan must identify available federal funding sources for the expansion or improvement of



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broadband. The strategic plan must be submitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by June 30, 2022. The strategic plan must be updated biennially thereafter. The plan must include a process to review and verify public input regarding transmission speeds and availability of broadband Internet service throughout this state. The office shall consult with each regional rural community liaison center within the Office of Rural Prosperity on the development and update of the plan.

(b) Build and facilitate local technology planning teams or partnerships with members representing cross-sections of the community, which may include, but are not limited to, representatives from the following organizations and industries: libraries, K-12 education, colleges and universities, local health care providers, private businesses, community organizations, economic development organizations, local governments, tourism, parks and recreation, and agriculture. The local technology planning teams or partnerships shall work with rural communities to help the communities understand their current broadband availability, locate unserved and underserved businesses and residents, identify assets relevant to broadband deployment, build partnerships with broadband service providers, and identify opportunities to leverage assets and reduce barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet services in the community. The teams or partnerships must be proactive in rural communities as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~fiscally constrained counties~~ in identifying and providing assistance, in coordination with the regional rural community liaison centers within the Office of Rural Prosperity, with applying for federal



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grants for broadband Internet service.

(c) Provide technical and planning assistance to rural communities in coordination with the regional rural community liaison centers within the Office of Rural Prosperity.

(6) The office shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a quarterly report detailing the implementation of broadband activities in rural, unserved, and underserved communities. Such information must be listed by county and include the amount of state and federal funds allocated and expended in the county by program; the progress toward deploying broadband in the county; any technical assistance provided; the activities of the local technology planning teams and partnerships; and the fulfillment of any other duties of the office required by this part.

(7) By December 31 each year, the office shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives an annual report on the office's operations and accomplishments for that calendar year and the status of broadband Internet service access and use in this state. The report must also incorporate the quarterly reports on rural, unserved, and underserved communities required by subsection (6).

Section 25. Section 290.06561, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 26. Paragraph (a) of subsection (5) of section 319.32, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

319.32 Fees; service charges; disposition.—

(5)(a) Forty-seven dollars of each fee collected, except for fees charged on a certificate of title for a motor vehicle



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for hire registered under s. 320.08(6), for each applicable original certificate of title and each applicable duplicate copy of a certificate of title shall be deposited as follows: ~~into the State Transportation Trust Fund. Deposits to the State Transportation Trust Fund pursuant to this paragraph may not exceed \$200 million in any fiscal year, and from any collections in excess of that amount during the fiscal year,~~

1. The first \$30 million collected shall be deposited into the Highway Safety Operating Trust Fund; ~~and~~

2. Any remaining collections shall be paid into the State Transportation Trust General Revenue Fund.

Section 27. Subsection (37) is added to section 334.044, Florida Statutes, to read:

334.044 Powers and duties of the department.—The department shall have the following general powers and duties:

(37) To provide technical assistance and support from the appropriate district of the department to counties that are not located in a metropolitan planning organization created pursuant to s. 339.175.

Section 28. Section 339.0801, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

339.0801 Allocation of increased revenues derived from amendments to s. 319.32(5)(a) ~~by ch. 2012-128.~~—

(1) The first \$200 million of funds that result from increased revenues to the State Transportation Trust Fund derived from the amendments to s. 319.32(5)(a) made by s. 11, chapter 2012-128, Laws of Florida, this act must be used annually, first as set forth in paragraph (a) subsection (1) and then as set forth in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) subsections



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~~(2)-(4)~~, notwithstanding any other provision of law:

(a)1.~~(1)(a)~~ Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and annually for 30 years thereafter, \$10 million shall be for the purpose of funding any seaport project identified in the adopted work program of the Department of Transportation, to be known as the Seaport Investment Program.

2.~~(b)~~ The revenues may be assigned, pledged, or set aside as a trust for the payment of principal or interest on revenue bonds, or other forms of indebtedness issued by an individual port or appropriate local government having jurisdiction thereof, or collectively by interlocal agreement among any of the ports, or used to purchase credit support to permit such borrowings. Alternatively, revenue bonds shall be issued by the Division of Bond Finance at the request of the Department of Transportation under the State Bond Act and shall be secured by such revenues as are provided in this subsection.

3.~~(c)~~ Revenue bonds or other indebtedness issued hereunder are not a general obligation of the state and are secured solely by a first lien on the revenues distributed under this subsection.

4.~~(d)~~ The state covenants with holders of the revenue bonds or other instruments of indebtedness issued pursuant to this subsection that it will not repeal this subsection; nor take any other action, including but not limited to amending this subsection, that will materially and adversely affect the rights of such holders so long as revenue bonds or other indebtedness authorized by this subsection are outstanding.

5.~~(e)~~ The proceeds of any revenue bonds or other indebtedness, after payment of costs of issuance and



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establishment of any required reserves, shall be invested in projects approved by the Department of Transportation and included in the department's adopted work program, by amendment if necessary. As required under s. 11(f), Art. VII of the State Constitution, the Legislature approves projects included in the department's adopted work program, including any projects added to the work program by amendment under s. 339.135(7).

6.~~(f)~~ Any revenues that are not used for the payment of bonds as authorized by this subsection may be used for purposes authorized under the Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Program. This revenue source is in addition to any amounts provided for and appropriated in accordance with ss. 311.07 and 320.20(3) and (4).

(b)~~(2)~~ Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and annually thereafter, \$10 million shall be transferred to the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund, to be used as specified in s. 427.0159.

(c)~~(3)~~ Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and annually thereafter, \$10 million shall be allocated to the Small County Outreach Program to be used as specified in s. 339.2818. These funds are in addition to the funds provided for the program pursuant to s. 201.15(4)(a)2.

(d)~~(4)~~ After the distributions required pursuant to paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) ~~subsections (1)-(3)~~, the remaining funds shall be used annually for transportation projects within this state for existing or planned strategic transportation projects which connect major markets within this state or between this state and other states, which focus on job creation, and which increase this state's viability in the



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national and global markets.

(2) The remaining funds that result from increased revenue to the State Transportation Trust Fund derived pursuant to s. 319.32(5)(a) must be used annually, notwithstanding any other law, beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year and annually thereafter, for the Small County Road Assistance Program as prescribed in s. 339.2816.

(3)~~(5)~~ Pursuant to s. 339.135(7), the department shall amend the work program to add the projects provided for in this section.

Section 29. Subsection (3) and paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section 339.2816, Florida Statutes, are amended, and paragraph (c) of subsection (4) of that section is reenacted, to read:

339.2816 Small County Road Assistance Program.—

(3) Beginning with fiscal year ~~1999-2000 until fiscal year 2009-2010, and beginning again with fiscal year 2012-2013, up to~~ \$25 million annually from the State Transportation Trust Fund must ~~may~~ be used for the purposes of funding the Small County Road Assistance Program as described in this section. In addition, beginning with fiscal year 2025-2026, the department must use the additional revenues allocated by s. 339.0801 for the Small County Road Assistance Program.

(4)(a) Small counties shall be eligible to compete for funds that have been designated for the Small County Road Assistance Program for resurfacing or reconstruction projects on county roads that were part of the county road system on June 10, 1995. Capacity improvements on county roads are ~~shall not be~~ eligible for funding under the program unless a safety issue



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exists or the department finds it necessary to widen existing lanes as part of a resurfacing or reconstruction project.

(c) The following criteria must be used to prioritize road projects for funding under the program:

1. The primary criterion is the physical condition of the road as measured by the department.

2. As secondary criteria the department may consider:

a. Whether a road is used as an evacuation route.

b. Whether a road has high levels of agricultural travel.

c. Whether a road is considered a major arterial route.

d. Whether a road is considered a feeder road.

e. Whether a road is located in a fiscally constrained county, as defined in s. 218.67(1).

f. Other criteria related to the impact of a project on the public road system or on the state or local economy as determined by the department.

Section 30. Subsection (3) of section 339.2817, Florida Statutes, is amended, and a new subsection (6) is added to that section, to read:

339.2817 County Incentive Grant Program.—

(3) The department must consider, but is not limited to, the following criteria for evaluation of projects for County Incentive Grant Program assistance:

(a) The extent to which the project will encourage, enhance, or create economic benefits;

(b) The likelihood that assistance would enable the project to proceed at an earlier date than the project could otherwise proceed;

(c) The extent to which assistance would foster innovative



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public-private partnerships and attract private debt or equity investment;

(d) The extent to which the project uses new technologies, including intelligent transportation systems, which enhance the efficiency of the project;

(e) The extent to which the project enhances connectivity between rural agricultural areas and market distribution centers;

(f)~~(e)~~ The extent to which the project helps to maintain or protect the environment; and

(g)~~(f)~~ The extent to which the project includes transportation benefits for improving intermodalism and safety.

(6) A county located either wholly or partially within the Everglades Agricultural Area as defined in s. 373.4592(15) may, notwithstanding subsection (4), request 100 percent of project costs for eligible projects that meet the criteria established in paragraph (3)(e).

Section 31. Subsections (1), (2), (3), (6), (7), and (8) of section 339.2818, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

339.2818 Small County Outreach Program.—

(1) There is created within the department ~~of Transportation~~ the Small County Outreach Program. The purpose of this program is to assist small county governments in repairing or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads, addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety improvements to county roads.

(2) For the purposes of this section, the term “small county” means any county that has a population of 200,000 or



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less as determined by the most recent official population census determination estimate pursuant to s. 186.901.

~~(3) Funds allocated under this program, pursuant to s. 4, ch. 2000-257, Laws of Florida, are in addition to any funds provided pursuant to s. 339.2816, for the Small County Road Assistance Program.~~

(5)~~(6)~~ Funds paid into the State Transportation Trust Fund pursuant to ss. 201.15, 320.072, and 339.0801 ~~s. 201.15~~ for the purposes of the Small County Outreach Program are hereby annually appropriated for expenditure to support the Small County Outreach Program.

(6)~~(7)~~ Subject to a specific appropriation in addition to funds annually appropriated for projects under this section, a municipality within a rural area of opportunity or a rural area of opportunity community designated under s. 288.0656(7)(a) may compete for the additional project funding using the criteria listed in subsection (3) ~~(4)~~ at up to 100 percent of project costs, excluding capacity improvement projects.

~~(8) Subject to a specific appropriation in addition to funds appropriated for projects under this section, a local government either wholly or partially within the Everglades Agricultural Area as defined in s. 373.4592(15), the Peace River Basin, or the Suwannee River Basin may compete for additional funding using the criteria listed in paragraph (4)(c) at up to 100 percent of project costs on state or county roads used primarily as farm-to-market connections between rural agricultural areas and market distribution centers, excluding capacity improvement projects.~~

Section 32. Section 339.68, Florida Statutes, is amended to



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read:

(Substantial rewording of section.

See s. 339.68, F.S., for present text.)

339.68 Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program.—

(1) The Legislature finds that increasing demands continue to be placed on rural arterial roads in this state by a fast-growing economy, continued population growth, and increased tourism. Investment in the rural arterial roads of this state is needed to maintain the safety, mobility, reliability, and resiliency of the transportation system in order to support the movement of people, goods, and commodities; to enhance economic prosperity and competitiveness; and to enrich the quality of life of the rural communities and the environment of this state.

(2) The Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program is created within the department to make capacity and safety improvements to two-lane arterial roads located in rural communities. For purposes of this section, the term "rural community" has the same meaning as provided in s. 288.0656.

(3) Beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the department shall allocate from the State Transportation Trust Fund a minimum of \$50 million in each fiscal year for purposes of funding the program. This funding is in addition to any other funding provided to the program by any other law.

(4) The department shall use the following criteria to prioritize projects for funding under the program:

(a) Whether the road has documented safety concerns or requires additional safety and design improvements. This may be evidenced by the number of fatalities or crashes per vehicle mile traveled.



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(b) Whether the road has or is projected to have a significant amount of truck tractor traffic as determined by the department. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "truck tractor" has the same meaning as in s. 320.01(11).

(c) Whether the road is used to transport agricultural products and commodities from the farm to the market or other sale or distribution point.

(d) Whether the road is used to transport goods to or from warehouses, distribution centers, or intermodal logistics centers as defined in s. 311.101(2).

(e) Whether the road is used as an evacuation route.

(f) Whether the physical condition of the road meets department standards.

(g) Whether the road currently has, or is projected to have within the next 5 years, a level of service of D, E, or F.

(h) Any other criteria related to the impact of a project on the public road system or on the state or local economy as determined by the department.

(5) By January 1, 2027, and every 2 years thereafter, the department shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report regarding the use and condition of arterial roads located in rural communities, which report must include the following:

(a) A map of roads located in rural communities which are designated as arterial roads.

(b) A needs assessment that must include, but is not limited to, consideration of infrastructure improvements to improve capacity on arterial roads in rural communities.

(c) A synopsis of the department's project prioritization



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process.

(d) An estimate of the local and state economic impact of improving capacity on arterial roads in rural communities.

(e) A listing of the arterial roads and the associated improvements to be included in the program and a schedule or timeline for the inclusion of such projects in the work program.

Section 33. (1) The Department of Transportation shall allocate the additional funds provided by this act to implement the Small County Road Assistance Program as created by s. 339.2816, Florida Statutes, and amend the current tentative work program for the 2025-2026 through 2031-2032 fiscal years to include additional projects. In addition, before adoption of the work program, the department shall submit a budget amendment pursuant to s. 339.135(7), Florida Statutes, requesting budget authority necessary to implement the additional projects.

(2) The department shall allocate sufficient funds to implement the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program, develop a plan to expend the revenues as specified in s. 339.68, Florida Statutes, and, before its adoption, amend the current tentative work program for the 2025-2026 through 2031-2032 fiscal years to include the program's projects. In addition, before adoption of the work program, the department shall submit a budget amendment pursuant to s. 339.135(7), Florida Statutes, requesting budget authority necessary to implement the program as specified in s. 339.68, Florida Statutes.

(3) Notwithstanding any other law, the increase in revenue to the State Transportation Trust Fund derived from the amendments to ss. 201.15 and 319.32, Florida Statutes, made by this act and deposited into the trust fund pursuant to ss.



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201.15 and 339.0801, Florida Statutes, shall be used by the
department to fund the programs as specified in this section.

Section 34. Paragraph (h) is added to subsection (2) of
section 381.402, Florida Statutes, and paragraph (b) of
subsection (3) of that section is amended, to read:

381.402 Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical
Education Program.—

(2) The following licensed or certified health care
practitioners are eligible to participate in the program:

(h) Medical doctors or doctors of osteopathic medicine who
are board certified in emergency medicine and employed by or
under contract with a rural hospital as defined in s.
395.602(2)(b) or a rural emergency hospital as defined in s.
395.607(1)(a) to provide medical care in the rural hospital's or
rural emergency hospital's emergency department.

Primary care medical specialties for physicians include
obstetrics, gynecology, general and family practice, geriatrics,
internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, and other specialties
which may be identified by the Department of Health.

(3) From the funds available, the Department of Health
shall make payments as follows:

(b) All payments are contingent on continued proof of:

1.a. Primary care practice in a rural hospital as defined
in s. 395.602(2)(b) or an underserved area designated by the
Department of Health, provided the practitioner accepts Medicaid
reimbursement if eligible for such reimbursement; ~~or~~

b. Emergency medicine practice in a rural hospital as
defined in s. 395.602(2)(b) or rural emergency hospital as



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defined in s. 395.607(1)(a), provided the practitioner accepts
Medicaid reimbursement if eligible for such reimbursement; or

~~c.b.~~ For practitioners other than physicians, practice in
other settings, including, but not limited to, a nursing home
facility as defined in s. 400.021, a home health agency as
defined in s. 400.462, or an intermediate care facility for the
developmentally disabled as defined in s. 400.960. Any such
setting must be located in, or serve residents or patients in,
an underserved area designated by the Department of Health and
must provide services to Medicaid patients.

2. Providing 25 hours annually of volunteer ~~primary care~~
services within the practitioner's scope of practice in a free
clinic as specified in s. 766.1115(3)(d)14. or through another
volunteer program operated ~~by the state~~ pursuant to part IV of
chapter 110 and approved by the department. In order to meet the
requirements of this subparagraph, the volunteer hours must be
verifiable in a manner determined by the department.

Section 35. Section 381.403, Florida Statutes, is created
to read:

381.403 Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant
Program.—The Legislature recognizes that access to primary and
preventive health care is critical for the well-being of the
residents of this state. The Legislature also recognizes that
many rural areas of this state have significantly fewer
available physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous
advanced practice registered nurses who serve those areas. To
increase the availability of health care in such underserved
rural areas, there is created the Rural Access to Primary and
Preventive Care Grant Program within the Department of Health to



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use grants to incentivize the creation or expansion of health care practices in those areas.

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Autonomous advanced practice registered nurse" means an advanced practice registered nurse who is registered under s. 464.0123 to engage in autonomous practice.

(b) "Majority ownership" means ownership of more than 50 percent of the interests in a private practice.

(c) "Physician" means a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459.

(d) "Physician assistant" means a physician assistant licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459 to perform medical services delegated by a supervising physician.

(e) "Preventive care" means routine health care services designed to prevent illness. The term includes, but is not limited to, general physical examinations provided on an annual basis, screenings for acute or chronic illnesses, and patient counseling to promote overall wellness and avoid the need for emergency services.

(f) "Primary care" means health care services focused primarily on preventive care, wellness care, and treatment for common illnesses. The term may include the health care provider serving as a patient's entry point into the overall health care system and coordinating a patient's care among specialists or acute care settings. The term does not include elective services provided solely for cosmetic purposes.

(g) "Program" means the Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant Program.

(h) "Qualifying rural area" means a rural community as



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defined in s. 288.0657 in this state which is also designated as a health professional shortage area by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

(2) The department shall award grants under the program to physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous advanced practice registered nurses who intend to open a new private practice in a qualifying rural area or who intend to open a new location within a qualifying rural area if the current private practice is located in a different county. To qualify for a grant, an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

(a) The practice must:

1. Have majority ownership by physicians, physician assistants, or autonomous advanced practice registered nurses, or a combination thereof.

2. Be physically located in a qualifying rural area and serve at that location patients who live in that qualifying rural area or in other nearby qualifying rural areas. The practice may also serve patients who reside outside of a qualifying rural area. While the practice may use telehealth to supplement the services provided at the location, the majority of services provided by the practice must be provided in-person at the physical location.

3. Accept Medicaid patients.

4. Provide services solely in primary care or preventative care, except that a physician, and any nurse licensed under chapter 464 or any physician assistant supervised by the physician, may provide services at the practice in primary care or preventative care, or services that are within the



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practitioner's scope of practice based on the physician's board-
certified specialty in obstetrics, gynecology, general and
family practice, geriatrics, internal medicine, pediatrics, or
psychiatry.

(b) The owners of the practice must commit to providing the
following information to the department on an annual basis, and
upon request by the department, for the duration of the contract
entered into pursuant to subsection (6):

1. Deidentified patient encounter data.

2. A detailed report on the use of grant funds until such
funds are expended.

(3) By March 1, 2026, the department shall create an
application process for eligible physicians, physician
assistants, and autonomous advanced practice registered nurses
to apply for grants under the program. The application must
require a detailed budget of anticipated use of grant funds and
how the new or existing practice will meet the requirements of
subsection (2). The department shall establish a ranking system
to determine which applicants will be awarded grants if there
are more applicants for the program than can be awarded grants
with available appropriated funds.

(4) Subject to specific appropriation, the department may
award grants of up to \$250,000 to eligible applicants. Only one
grant may be awarded per practice. Grant funds awarded for
establishing a new private practice or a new practice location
may be used for any of the following expenses:

(a) Facility construction, acquisition, renovation, or
lease.

(b) Purchasing medical equipment.



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(c) Purchasing or implementing information technology equipment or services.

(d) Purchasing or implementing telehealth technology.

(e) Training on the use of medical equipment, information technology, or telehealth technology implemented under paragraph (b), paragraph (c), or paragraph (d), respectively.

(5) Grant funds may not be used for any of the following:

(a) Salaries.

(b) Utilities.

(c) Internet or telecommunications services other than those necessary for implementing telehealth technology under paragraph (4) (d).

(d) Insurance.

(e) Incidental maintenance and repairs.

(f) Disposable medical supplies.

(g) Medicines or vaccines.

(h) Licensing or certification fees, including costs for continuing education other than training under paragraph (4) (e).

(6) The department shall enter into a contract with each grant recipient which details the requirements for the expenditure of grant funds for that recipient. The contract must include, at a minimum, all of the following:

(a) The purpose of the contract.

(b) Specific performance standards and responsibilities for the recipient under the contract, including penalties for not meeting such performance standards and responsibilities.

(c) A detailed project or contract budget, if applicable.

(d) Reporting requirements for grant recipients to provide information to the department under paragraph (2) (b) as well as



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any additional information the department deems necessary for the administration of the program.

(7) The department may adopt rules to implement the program.

(8) Beginning July 1, 2026, and each year thereafter in which there are outstanding contracts with grant recipients under subsection (6), the department shall provide a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives which includes, but need not be limited to, all of the following:

(a) Each grant awarded, including the proposed uses for each grant.

(b) The progress on each outstanding contract.

(c) The number of patients residing in rural areas who were served by grant awardees.

(d) The number of Medicaid recipients who were served by grant awardees.

(e) The number and types of services provided during patient encounters in locations opened under the program.

(f) The number of health care practitioners, delineated by licensure type, providing services in locations opened under the program.

(9) This section is repealed July 1, 2035, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

Section 36. Section 381.9856, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

381.9856 Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and Education Grant Program.—

(1) PROGRAM CREATION.—The Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric



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Response and Education (SCORE) Grant Program is created within the Department of Health.

(2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program is to improve patient outcomes and the coordination of emergency medical care in rural communities by increasing access to high-quality stroke, cardiac, and obstetric care through the application of technology and innovative training, such as blended learning training programs. Blended learning training programs ensure that participants gain both the theoretical foundations of diagnosis and management as well as real-world clinical experience through scenario-based learning, ultimately enhancing decisionmaking and patient outcomes.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Blended learning training program” means a structured educational model that uses blended learning methodologies, including simulation-based training, virtual reality, and distance learning technologies, in conjunction with hands-on instruction, such as simulation-based practice, and in-person skills sessions to provide comprehensive education.

(b) “High-risk care provider” means a licensed health care facility or licensed ambulance service that regularly provides emergency or ongoing care to patients experiencing a stroke, heart attack, or pregnancy-related emergency.

(c) “Rural community” has the same meaning as provided in s. 288.0657.

(4) GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

(a) The department shall award grants to high-risk care providers serving rural communities to accomplish at least one of the following initiatives:



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1. Implement a blended learning training program for health care providers in stroke care protocols and best practices.

2. Purchase simulation equipment and technology for training.

3. Establish telehealth capabilities between prehospital providers, such as paramedics or emergency medical technicians, and in-hospital providers, such as neurologists, to expedite emergency stroke care, emergency cardiac care, or emergency obstetric care.

4. Develop quality improvement programs in one or more of the following specialty areas: emergency stroke care, emergency cardiac care, or emergency obstetric care.

(b) Priority must be given to proposals that:

1. Demonstrate collaboration between prehospital and in-hospital providers; or

2. Show potential for significant improvement in patient outcomes in rural communities.

(5) FUNDING LIMITS; REPORTING.—

(a) Individual grants may not exceed \$100,000 per year.

(b) Grant recipients must submit quarterly reports to the department documenting program activities, expenditures, and outcomes.

(6) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall monitor program implementation and outcomes. The department shall submit an annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of each year, detailing program implementation and outcomes.

(7) RULEMAKING.—The department may adopt rules to implement this section.



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2099 (8) IMPLEMENTATION.—This section may be implemented only to
2100 the extent specifically funded by legislative appropriation.

2101 (9) REPEAL.—This section is repealed July 1, 2030, unless
2102 reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the
2103 Legislature.

2104 Section 37. Subsection (2) of section 395.6061, Florida
2105 Statutes, is amended to read:

2106 395.6061 Rural hospital capital improvement.—There is
2107 established a rural hospital capital improvement grant program.

2108 (2)(a) Each rural hospital as defined in s. 395.602 shall
2109 receive a minimum of \$100,000 annually, subject to legislative
2110 appropriation, upon application to the Department of Health, for
2111 projects to acquire, repair, improve, or upgrade systems,
2112 facilities, or equipment. Such projects may include, but are not
2113 limited to, the following:

2114 1. Establishing mobile care units to provide primary care
2115 services, behavioral health services, or obstetric and
2116 gynecological services in rural health professional shortage
2117 areas.

2118 2. Establishing telehealth kiosks to provide urgent care
2119 and primary care services remotely in rural health professional
2120 shortage areas.

2121 (b) As used in this subsection, the term:

2122 1. “Preventive care” means routine health care services
2123 designed to prevent illness. The term includes, but is not
2124 limited to, general physical examinations provided on an annual
2125 basis, screenings for acute or chronic illnesses, and patient
2126 counseling to promote overall wellness and avoid the need for
2127 emergency services.



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2. "Primary care" means health care services focused primarily on preventive care, wellness care, and treatment for common illnesses. The term may include the health care provider serving as a patient's entry point into the overall health care system and coordinating a patient's care among specialists or acute care settings. The term does not include elective services provided solely for cosmetic purposes.

3. "Rural health professional shortage area" means a rural community as defined in s. 288.0657 which is also designated as a health professional shortage area by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Section 38. Subsection (3) of section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

420.9073 Local housing distributions.—

(3) Calculation of guaranteed amounts:

(a) The guaranteed amount under subsection (1) shall be calculated for each state fiscal year by multiplying \$1 million ~~\$350,000~~ by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of funds distributed to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15(4)(c) and the denominator of which is the total amount of funds distributed to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15.

(b) The guaranteed amount under subsection (2) shall be calculated for each state fiscal year by multiplying \$1 million ~~\$350,000~~ by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of funds distributed to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15(4)(d) and the denominator of which is the total amount of funds distributed to the Local Government



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Housing Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15.

Section 39. Paragraph (n) of subsection (5) of section 420.9075, Florida Statutes, is amended, paragraph (o) is added to that subsection, and paragraph (b) of subsection (13) of that section is reenacted, to read:

420.9075 Local housing assistance plans; partnerships.—

(5) The following criteria apply to awards made to eligible sponsors or eligible persons for the purpose of providing eligible housing:

(n) Funds from the local housing distribution not used to meet the criteria established in paragraph (a), ~~or~~ paragraph (c), or paragraph (o), or not used for the administration of a local housing assistance plan must be used for housing production and finance activities, including, but not limited to, financing preconstruction activities or the purchase of existing units, providing rental housing, and providing home ownership training to prospective home buyers and owners of homes assisted through the local housing assistance plan.

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (c), program income as defined in s. 420.9071(26) may also be used to fund activities described in this paragraph.

2. When preconstruction due-diligence activities conducted as part of a preservation strategy show that preservation of the units is not feasible and will not result in the production of an eligible unit, such costs shall be deemed a program expense rather than an administrative expense if such program expenses do not exceed 3 percent of the annual local housing distribution.

3. If both an award under the local housing assistance plan



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and federal low-income housing tax credits are used to assist a project and there is a conflict between the criteria prescribed in this subsection and the requirements of s. 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, the county or eligible municipality may resolve the conflict by giving precedence to the requirements of s. 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, in lieu of following the criteria prescribed in this subsection with the exception of paragraphs (a) and (g) of this subsection.

4. Each county and each eligible municipality may award funds as a grant for construction, rehabilitation, or repair as part of disaster recovery or emergency repairs or to remedy accessibility or health and safety deficiencies. Any other grants must be approved as part of the local housing assistance plan.

(o) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a) and (c), up to 25 percent of the funds made available in each county and eligible municipality from the local housing distribution may be used to preserve multifamily affordable rental housing funded through United States Department of Agriculture loans. These funds may be used to rehabilitate housing, extend affordability periods, or acquire or transfer properties in partnership with private organizations. This paragraph expires on June 30, 2031.

(13)

(b) If, as a result of its review of the annual report, the corporation determines that a county or eligible municipality has failed to implement a local housing incentive strategy, or, if applicable, a local housing incentive plan, it shall send a notice of termination of the local government's share of the



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local housing distribution by certified mail to the affected county or eligible municipality.

1. The notice must specify a date of termination of the funding if the affected county or eligible municipality does not implement the plan or strategy and provide for a local response. A county or eligible municipality shall respond to the corporation within 30 days after receipt of the notice of termination.

2. The corporation shall consider the local response that extenuating circumstances precluded implementation and grant an extension to the timeframe for implementation. Such an extension shall be made in the form of an extension agreement that provides a timeframe for implementation. The chief elected official of a county or eligible municipality or his or her designee shall have the authority to enter into the agreement on behalf of the local government.

3. If the county or the eligible municipality has not implemented the incentive strategy or entered into an extension agreement by the termination date specified in the notice, the local housing distribution share terminates, and any uncommitted local housing distribution funds held by the affected county or eligible municipality in its local housing assistance trust fund shall be transferred to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund to the credit of the corporation to administer.

4.a. If the affected local government fails to meet the timeframes specified in the agreement, the corporation shall terminate funds. The corporation shall send a notice of termination of the local government's share of the local housing distribution by certified mail to the affected local government.



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The notice shall specify the termination date, and any uncommitted funds held by the affected local government shall be transferred to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund to the credit of the corporation to administer.

b. If the corporation terminates funds to a county, but an eligible municipality receiving a local housing distribution pursuant to an interlocal agreement maintains compliance with program requirements, the corporation shall thereafter distribute directly to the participating eligible municipality its share calculated in the manner provided in ss. 420.9072 and 420.9073.

c. Any county or eligible municipality whose local distribution share has been terminated may subsequently elect to receive directly its local distribution share by adopting the ordinance, resolution, and local housing assistance plan in the manner and according to the procedures provided in ss. 420.907-420.9079.

Section 40. Subsections (1), (2), and (5) of section 1001.451, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (6) is added to that section, to read:

1001.451 Regional consortium service organizations.—In order to provide a full range of programs to larger numbers of students, minimize duplication of services, and encourage the development of new programs and services:

(1) School districts with 20,000 or fewer unweighted full-time equivalent students, developmental research (laboratory) schools established pursuant to s. 1002.32, and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind may enter into cooperative agreements to form a regional consortium service organization.



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Each regional consortium service organization shall provide any
~~of, at a minimum, three of~~ the following services determined
necessary and appropriate by the board of directors:

(a) Exceptional student education;

(b) Safe schools support ~~teacher education centers;~~
~~environmental education;~~

(c) State and federal grant procurement and coordination;

(d) Data services ~~processing; health~~

(e) Insurance services;

(f) Risk management ~~insurance;~~

(g) Professional learning;

(h) College, career, and workforce development;

(i) Business and operational services ~~staff development;~~

(j) Purchasing; or

(k) Planning and accountability.

(2)(a) Each regional consortium service organization that
consists of four or more school districts is eligible to
receive, through the Department of Education, subject to the
funds provided in the General Appropriations Act, an allocation
~~incentive grant~~ of \$150,000 ~~\$50,000~~ per school district and
eligible member to be used for the delivery of services within
~~the~~ participating school districts. The determination of
services and use of such funds must ~~shall~~ be established by the
board of directors of the regional consortium service
organization. The funds must ~~shall~~ be distributed to each
regional consortium service organization no later than 30 days
following the release of the funds to the department. Each
regional consortium service organization shall submit an annual
report to the department regarding the use of funds for



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consortia services. Unexpended amounts in any fund in a
consortium's current year operating budget must be carried
forward and included as the balance forward for that fund in the
approved operating budget for the following year. Each regional
consortium service organization shall provide quarterly
financial reports to member districts.

(b) Member districts shall designate a district that will
serve as a fiscal agent for contractual and reporting purposes.
Such fiscal agent district is entitled to reasonable
compensation for accounting and other services performed. The
regional consortium service organization shall retain all funds
received from grants or contracted services to cover indirect or
administrative costs associated with the provision of such
services. The regional consortium service organization board of
directors shall determine the products and services to be
provided by the consortium; however, in all contractual matters,
the school board of the fiscal agent district shall act on
proposed actions of the regional consortium service
organization.

(c) The regional consortium service organization board of
directors shall recommend establishment of positions and
individuals for appointment to the fiscal agent district.
Personnel must be employed under the personnel policies of the
fiscal agent district and are deemed to be public employees of
the fiscal agent district. The regional consortium service
organization board of directors may recommend a salary schedule
and job descriptions specific to its personnel.

(d) The regional consortium service organization may
purchase or lease property and facilities essential for its



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operations and is responsible for their maintenance and
associated overhead costs.

(e) If a regional consortium service organization is
dissolved, any revenue from the sale of assets must be
distributed among the member districts as determined by the
board of directors ~~Application for incentive grants shall be
made to the Commissioner of Education by July 30 of each year
for distribution to qualifying regional consortium service
organizations by January 1 of the fiscal year.~~

(5) The board of directors of a regional consortium service
organization may use various means to generate revenue in
support of its activities, including, but not limited to,
contracting for services to nonmember districts. The board of
directors may acquire, enjoy, use, and dispose of patents,
copyrights, and trademarks and any licenses and associated ~~other~~
rights or interests ~~thereunder or therein~~. Ownership of all such
patents, copyrights, trademarks, licenses, and associated rights
or interests ~~thereunder or therein shall~~ vest in the state, with
the board of directors having full right of use and full right
to retain associated ~~the~~ revenues ~~derived therefrom~~. Any funds
realized from contracted services, patents, copyrights,
trademarks, or licenses are ~~shall be~~ considered internal funds
as provided in s. 1011.07. A fund balance must be established
for maintaining or expanding services, facilities maintenance,
terminal pay, and other liabilities ~~Such funds shall be used to
support the organization's marketing and research and
development activities in order to improve and increase services
to its member districts.~~

(6) A regional consortium service organization is



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authorized to administer the Regional Consortia Service
Organization Supplemental Services Program under s. 1001.4511.

Section 41. Section 1001.4511, Florida Statutes, is created
to read:

1001.4511 Regional Consortia Service Organization
Supplemental Services Program.—

(1) There is created the Regional Consortia Service
Organization Supplemental Services Program to increase the
ability of regional consortium service organizations under s.
1001.451 to provide programs and services to consortia members
through cooperative agreements. Program funds may be used to
supplement member needs related to transportation; district
finance personnel services; property insurance, including
property insurance obtained from any source; cybersecurity
support; school safety; college, career, and workforce
development; academic support; and behavior support within
exceptional student education services.

(2) Each regional consortium service organization shall
annually report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
of the House of Representatives the distribution of funds,
including members awarded and services provided.

(3) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351,
funds allocated for this purpose which are not disbursed by June
30 of the fiscal year in which the funds are allocated may be
carried forward for up to 5 years after the effective date of
the original appropriation.

Section 42. Section 1009.635, Florida Statutes, is created
to read:

1009.635 Rural Incentive for Professional Educators.—



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(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Rural Incentive for Professional Educators (RIPE) Program is established within the Department of Education to support the recruitment and retention of qualified instructional personnel in rural communities. The program shall provide financial assistance for the repayment of student loans for eligible participants who establish permanent residency and employment in rural areas of opportunity.

(2) ELIGIBILITY.—An individual is eligible to participate in the RIPE Program if he or she does all of the following:

(a) Establishes permanent residency on or after July 1, 2025, in a rural area of opportunity as designated pursuant to s. 288.0656. The address on an individual's state-issued identification card or driver license is evidence of residence.

(b) Secures full-time employment as a teacher or administrator in a private school as defined in s. 1002.01, or as instructional or administrative personnel as those terms are defined in s. 1012.01(2) and (3), respectively, in the public school district located within the same rural area of opportunity as he or she resides.

(c) Holds an associate degree, bachelor's degree, postgraduate degree, or certificate from an accredited institution earned before establishing residency.

(d) Has an active student loan balance incurred for the completion of the qualifying degree or certificate.

(3) LOAN REPAYMENT.—Eligible participants may receive up to \$15,000 in total student loan repayment assistance over 5 years, disbursed in annual payments not to exceed \$3,000 per year. Payments shall be made directly to the lender servicing the participant's student loan.



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(4) AWARD DISTRIBUTION.—Before disbursement of an award, the department shall verify that the participant:

(a) Has maintained continuous employment with the school district in an instructional or administrative position;

(b) Has received a rating of effective or highly effective pursuant to s. 1012.34; and

(c) Has not been placed on probation, had his or her certificate suspended or revoked, or been placed on the disqualification list, pursuant to s. 1012.796.

(5) ADMINISTRATION.—The program shall be administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the Department of Education, which shall:

(a) Develop application procedures requiring documentation, including proof of residency, verification of employment, official academic transcripts, and details of outstanding student loans.

(b) Monitor compliance with program requirements.

(6) RULEMAKING.—The State Board of Education shall adopt rules no later than January 31, 2026, to administer this section.

Section 43. Subsection (3) of section 1013.62, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1013.62 Charter schools capital outlay funding.—

(3) If the school board levies the discretionary millage authorized in s. 1011.71(2), the department must ~~shall~~ use the following calculation methodology to determine the amount of revenue that a school district must distribute to each eligible charter school:

(a) Reduce the total discretionary millage revenue by the



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school district's annual debt service obligation incurred as of March 1, 2017, which has not been subsequently retired, and:

1. Beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, for any district with an active project or an outstanding participation requirement balance, any amount of participation requirement pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)8. that is being satisfied by revenues raised by the discretionary millage; or

2. For construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the value of 1 mill from the revenue generated pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)8.b.

(b) Divide the school district's adjusted discretionary millage revenue by the district's total capital outlay full-time equivalent membership and the total number of full-time equivalent students of each eligible charter school to determine a capital outlay allocation per full-time equivalent student.

(c) Multiply the capital outlay allocation per full-time equivalent student by the total number of full-time equivalent students of each eligible charter school to determine the capital outlay allocation for each charter school.

(d) If applicable, reduce the capital outlay allocation identified in paragraph (c) by the total amount of state funds allocated to each eligible charter school in subsection (2) to determine the maximum calculated capital outlay allocation. The amount of funds a school district must distribute to charter schools shall be as follows:

1. For fiscal year 2023-2024, the amount is 20 percent of the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2. For fiscal year 2024-2025, the amount is 40 percent of



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the amount calculated under this paragraph.

3. For fiscal year 2025-2026, the amount is 60 percent of the amount calculated under this paragraph.

4. For fiscal year 2026-2027, the amount is 80 percent of the amount calculated under this paragraph.

5. For fiscal year 2027-2028, and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount is 100 percent of the amount calculated under this paragraph.

(e) School districts shall distribute capital outlay funds to eligible charter schools no later than February 1 of each year, as required by this subsection, based on the amount of funds received by the district school board. School districts shall distribute any remaining capital outlay funds, as required by this subsection, upon the receipt of such funds until the total amount calculated pursuant to this subsection is distributed.

By October 1 of each year, each school district shall certify to the department the amount of debt service that ~~and participation requirement that complies with the requirement of paragraph (a)~~ and can be reduced from the total discretionary millage revenue. Each school district shall also certify the amount of the participation requirement that complies with paragraph (a), or certify the value of 1 mill from revenue generated pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)8.b. that can be reduced from the total discretionary millage revenue, as applicable. The Auditor General shall verify compliance with the requirements of paragraph (a) and s. 1011.71(2)(e) during scheduled operational audits of school districts.



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Section 44. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 1013.64, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1013.64 Funds for comprehensive educational plant needs; construction cost maximums for school district capital projects.—Allocations from the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund to the various boards for capital outlay projects shall be determined as follows:

(2)(a) The department shall establish, as a part of the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund, a separate account, in an amount determined by the Legislature, to be known as the "Special Facility Construction Account." The Special Facility Construction Account shall be used to provide necessary construction funds to school districts which have urgent construction needs but which lack sufficient resources at present, and cannot reasonably anticipate sufficient resources within the period of the next 3 years, for these purposes from currently authorized sources of capital outlay revenue. A school district requesting funding from the Special Facility Construction Account shall submit one specific construction project, not to exceed one complete educational plant, to the Special Facility Construction Committee. A district may not receive funding for more than one approved project in any 3-year period ~~or while any portion of the district's participation requirement is outstanding.~~ The first year of the 3-year period shall be the first year a district receives an appropriation. The department shall encourage a construction program that reduces the average size of schools in the district. The request must meet the following criteria to be considered by the committee:



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1. The project must be deemed a critical need and must be recommended for funding by the Special Facility Construction Committee. Before developing construction plans for the proposed facility, the district school board must request a preapplication review by the Special Facility Construction Committee or a project review subcommittee convened by the chair of the committee to include two representatives of the department and two staff members from school districts not eligible to participate in the program. A school district may request a preapplication review at any time; however, if the district school board seeks inclusion in the department's next annual capital outlay legislative budget request, the preapplication review request must be made before February 1. Within 90 days after receiving the preapplication review request, the committee or subcommittee must meet in the school district to review the project proposal and existing facilities. To determine whether the proposed project is a critical need, the committee or subcommittee shall consider, at a minimum, the capacity of all existing facilities within the district as determined by the Florida Inventory of School Houses; the district's pattern of student growth; the district's existing and projected capital outlay full-time equivalent student enrollment as determined by the demographic, revenue, and education estimating conferences established in s. 216.136; the district's existing satisfactory student stations; the use of all existing district property and facilities; grade level configurations; and any other information that may affect the need for the proposed project.

2. The construction project must be recommended in the most



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recent survey or survey amendment cooperatively prepared by the district and the department, and approved by the department under the rules of the State Board of Education. If a district employs a consultant in the preparation of a survey or survey amendment, the consultant may not be employed by or receive compensation from a third party that designs or constructs a project recommended by the survey.

3. The construction project must appear on the district's approved project priority list under the rules of the State Board of Education.

4. The district must have selected and had approved a site for the construction project in compliance with s. 1013.36 and the rules of the State Board of Education.

5. The district shall have developed a district school board adopted list of facilities that do not exceed the norm for net square feet occupancy requirements under the State Requirements for Educational Facilities, using all possible programmatic combinations for multiple use of space to obtain maximum daily use of all spaces within the facility under consideration.

6. Upon construction, the total cost per student station, including change orders, must not exceed the cost per student station as provided in subsection (6) unless approved by the Special Facility Construction Committee. At the discretion of the committee, costs that exceed the cost per student station for special facilities may include legal and administrative fees, the cost of site improvements or related offsite improvements, the cost of complying with public shelter and hurricane hardening requirements, cost overruns created by a



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disaster as defined in s. 252.34(2), costs of security enhancements approved by the school safety specialist, and unforeseeable circumstances beyond the district's control.

7. There shall be an agreement signed by the district school board stating that it will advertise for bids within 30 days of receipt of its encumbrance authorization from the department.

8.a.(I) For construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought before the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the district shall, at the time of the request and for a continuing period necessary to meet the district's participation requirement, levy the maximum millage against its nonexempt assessed property value as allowed in s. 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).

(II) Beginning with construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the district shall, for a minimum of 3 years before submitting the request and for a continuing period necessary to meet its participation requirement, levy the maximum millage against the district's nonexempt assessed property value as authorized under s. 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).

(III) Beginning with the 2025-2026 fiscal year, any district with an ~~a new or~~ active project or an outstanding participation requirement balance, funded under ~~the provisions~~ of this subsection, shall be required to budget no more than the value of 1 mill per year to the project until the district's



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participation requirement relating to the local discretionary capital improvement millage or the equivalent amount of revenue from the school capital outlay surtax is satisfied.

b. For construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the district shall, for a minimum of 3 years before submitting the request and for the initial year of the appropriation and the 2 years following the initial appropriation, levy the maximum millage against the district's nonexempt assessed property value as authorized under s. 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6). The district is not required to budget the funds toward the project, but must use the funds as authorized pursuant to s. 1011.71 or s. 212.055(6), as applicable.

9. If a contract has not been signed 90 days after the advertising of bids, the funding for the specific project must ~~shall~~ revert to the Special Facility New Construction Account to be reallocated to other projects on the list. However, an additional 90 days may be granted by the commissioner.

10. The department shall certify the inability of the district to fund the survey-recommended project over a continuous 3-year period using projected capital outlay revenue derived from s. 9(d), Art. XII of the State Constitution, as amended, paragraph (3)(a) of this section, and s. 1011.71(2).

11.a. For projects funded before the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the district shall have on file with the department an adopted resolution acknowledging its commitment to satisfy its participation requirement, which is equivalent to all



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unencumbered and future revenue acquired from s. 9(d), Art. XII of the State Constitution, as amended, paragraph (3)(a) of this section, and s. 1011.71(2), in the year of the initial appropriation and for the 2 years immediately following the initial appropriation.

b. For projects funded during the 2025-2026 fiscal year, and thereafter, the district shall have on file with the department an adopted resolution acknowledging its commitment to comply with the requirements of this paragraph.

12. Phase I plans must be approved by the district school board as being in compliance with the building and life safety codes before June 1 of the year the application is made.

Section 45. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$1 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Florida Small Business Development Center Network under s. 288.001, Florida Statutes, to expand services in rural communities. The funds shall be allocated to the Office of Rural Prosperity budget entity within the Department of Commerce in the Special Categories-SBDCN Rural Services specific appropriation category.

Section 46. (1) For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$1,827,591 in recurring funds and \$652,327 in nonrecurring funds are appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Commerce.

(2) The recurring general revenue funds shall be allocated to the Office of Rural Prosperity budget entity in the following specific appropriations categories: \$1,585,823 in Salaries and Benefits, \$175,961 in Expenses, \$50,000 in Contracted Services, \$10,000 in Operating Capital Outlay, and \$5,807 in Transfer to



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the Department of Management Services/Statewide Human Resources Contract.

(3) The nonrecurring general revenue funds shall be allocated to the Office of Rural Prosperity budget entity in the following specific appropriations categories: \$92,327 in Expenses and \$560,000 in Acquisition of Motor Vehicles.

(4) The Department of Commerce is authorized to establish 17.00 full-time equivalent positions with associated salary rate of 1,060,000 in the Office of Rural Prosperity for the purpose of implementing this act. The following specific positions, classifications, and pay plans are authorized: 1.00 Director of General Operation, Class Code 9327, Pay Grade 940; 15.00 Government Analyst II, Class Code 2225, Pay Grade 026; and 1.00 Administrative Assistant II, Class Code 0712, Pay Grade 018.

Section 47. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the recurring sum of \$8 million from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement the Renaissance Grants Program created by s. 288.014, Florida Statutes. No funds may be used by the state for administrative costs.

Section 48. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the recurring sum of \$500,000 from the Grants and Donations Trust Fund within the Department of Commerce is appropriated to the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program created by s. 288.0175, Florida Statutes.

Section 49. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$4 million in nonrecurring funds and \$1 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund are appropriated to the Office of



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Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement
the Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund under s.
288.065, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

Section 50. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$40
million in nonrecurring funds and \$5 million in recurring funds
from the General Revenue Fund are appropriated to the Office of
Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement
the Rural Infrastructure Fund under s. 288.0655, Florida
Statutes, as amended by this act.

Section 51. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of
\$250,000 in recurring funds from the Grants and Donations Trust
Fund within the Department of Commerce is appropriated to the
Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to
implement s. 288.0657, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

Section 52. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$30
million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
appropriated to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to be
used to preserve affordable multifamily rental housing in rural
communities funded through United States Department of
Agriculture loans. The funds provided in this appropriation
shall be used to issue competitive requests for application for
the rehabilitation or acquisition of such properties to ensure
continued affordability. By October 1, 2026, the Florida Housing
Finance Corporation shall submit a report to the President of
the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on
projects funded pursuant to this section, which report must
include the number of units preserved and the financing
portfolio for each project.

Section 53. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25



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million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Department of Health for the purpose of implementing the Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant Program created under s. 381.403, Florida Statutes. Grant funds shall be awarded over a 5-year period. Notwithstanding s. 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s. 216.351, Florida Statutes, the unexpended balance of funds appropriated pursuant to this section which is not disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal year in which funds are appropriated may be carried forward through the 2033-2034 fiscal year.

Section 54. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$5 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Department of Health for the purpose of implementing the Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and Education Grant Program under s. 381.9856, Florida Statutes. Notwithstanding s. 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s. 216.351, Florida Statutes, the unexpended balance of funds appropriated pursuant to this section which is not disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal year in which funds are appropriated may be carried forward through the 2029-2030 fiscal year.

Section 55. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated in fixed capital outlay to the Department of Health for the purpose of implementing the rural hospital capital improvement grant program under s. 395.6061, Florida Statutes.

Section 56. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$187,255 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund and \$250,358 in recurring funds from the Medical Care Trust Fund are appropriated to the Agency for Health Care Administration to



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establish a Diagnosis-Related Grouping (DRG) reimbursement methodology for critical access hospitals, as defined in s. 408.07, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of providing inpatient reimbursement to such a hospital in amounts comparable to the reimbursement the hospital would receive for inpatient services from the federal Medicare program. The 2025-2026 fiscal year General Appropriations Act shall establish the DRG reimbursement methodology for critical access hospital inpatient services as directed in s. 409.905(5)(c), Florida Statutes. Health plans that participate in the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program shall pass through the fee increase to providers in this appropriation.

Section 57. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$7,508,124 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund and \$10,038,322 in recurring funds from the Medical Care Trust Fund are appropriated to the Agency for Health Care Administration to establish an Enhanced Ambulatory Patient Grouping (EAPG) reimbursement methodology for critical access hospitals, as defined in s. 408.07, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of providing outpatient reimbursement to such a hospital in amounts comparable to the reimbursement the hospital would receive for outpatient services from the federal Medicare program. The 2025-2026 fiscal year General Appropriations Act shall establish the EAPG reimbursement methodology for critical access hospital outpatient services as directed in s. 409.905(6)(b), Florida Statutes. Health plans that participate in the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program shall pass through the fee increase to providers in this appropriation.

Section 58. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$3.6



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million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Department of Education to implement s. 1001.451, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

Section 59. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education to be distributed to regional consortium service organizations under s. 1001.451, Florida Statutes, in order to provide funds pursuant to s. 1001.4511, Florida Statutes. These funds shall be allocated as follows: \$5,555,149 to the Heartland Educational Consortium; \$11,912,923 to the North East Florida Educational Consortium; and \$7,531,928 to the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium. The funds must be distributed to each regional consortium service organization no later than 30 days following the release of the funds to the department.

Section 60. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$7 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Department of Education to implement the Rural Incentive for Professional Educators (RIPE) Program, s. 1009.635, Florida Statutes, as created by this act.

Section 61. Subsection (3) of section 163.3187, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

163.3187 Process for adoption of small scale comprehensive plan amendment.—

(3) If the small scale development amendment involves a site within a rural area of opportunity as defined under s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(2)(d)~~ for the duration of such designation, the acreage limit listed in subsection (1) shall be increased by 100 percent. The local government approving the small scale plan



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amendment shall certify to the state land planning agency that the plan amendment furthers the economic objectives set forth in the executive order issued under s. 288.0656(7), and the property subject to the plan amendment shall undergo public review to ensure that all concurrency requirements and federal, state, and local environmental permit requirements are met.

Section 62. Section 212.205, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

212.205 Sales tax distribution reporting.—By March 15 of each year, each person who received a distribution pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. and c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b. and c.~~ in the preceding calendar year shall report to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research the following information:

(1) An itemized accounting of all expenditures of the funds distributed in the preceding calendar year, including amounts spent on debt service.

(2) A statement indicating what portion of the distributed funds have been pledged for debt service.

(3) The original principal amount and current debt service schedule of any bonds or other borrowing for which the distributed funds have been pledged for debt service.

Section 63. Section 257.191, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

257.191 Construction grants.—The Division of Library and Information Services may accept and administer library construction moneys appropriated to it and shall allocate such appropriation to municipal, county, and regional libraries in the form of library construction grants on a matching basis. The local matching portion shall be no less than the grant amount,



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on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to the maximum grant amount, unless the matching requirement is waived pursuant to s. 288.019 ~~by s. 288.06561~~. Initiation of a library construction project 12 months or less prior to the grant award under this section does ~~shall~~ not affect the eligibility of an applicant to receive a library construction grant. The division shall adopt rules for the administration of library construction grants. For the purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

Section 64. Subsection (2) of section 257.193, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

257.193 Community Libraries in Caring Program.—

(2) The purpose of the Community Libraries in Caring Program is to assist libraries in rural communities, as defined in s. 288.0656(2) and subject to the provisions of s. 288.019 ~~s. 288.06561~~, to strengthen their collections and services, improve literacy in their communities, and improve the economic viability of their communities.

Section 65. Subsection (17) of section 265.283, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

265.283 Definitions.—The following definitions shall apply to ss. 265.281-265.703:

(17) “Underserved arts community assistance program grants” means grants used by qualified organizations under the Rural Economic Development Initiative, pursuant to s. 288.0656 and subject to the provisions of s. 288.019 ~~ss. 288.0656 and 288.06561~~, for the purpose of economic and organizational development for underserved cultural organizations.

Section 66. Paragraphs (a) and (d) of subsection (3) of section 288.11621, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:



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288.11621 Spring training baseball franchises.—

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—

(a) A certified applicant may use funds provided under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ only to:

1. Serve the public purpose of acquiring, constructing, reconstructing, or renovating a facility for a spring training franchise.

2. Pay or pledge for the payment of debt service on, or to fund debt service reserve funds, arbitrage rebate obligations, or other amounts payable with respect thereto, bonds issued for the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or renovation of such facility, or for the reimbursement of such costs or the refinancing of bonds issued for such purposes.

3. Assist in the relocation of a spring training franchise from one unit of local government to another only if the governing board of the current host local government by a majority vote agrees to relocation.

(d)1. All certified applicants must place unexpended state funds received pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ in a trust fund or separate account for use only as authorized in this section.

2. A certified applicant may request that the Department of Revenue suspend further distributions of state funds made available under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ for 12 months after expiration of an existing agreement with a spring training franchise to provide the certified applicant with an opportunity to enter into a new agreement with a spring training franchise, at which time the distributions shall resume.

3. The expenditure of state funds distributed to an



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applicant certified before July 1, 2010, must begin within 48 months after the initial receipt of the state funds. In addition, the construction of, or capital improvements to, a spring training facility must be completed within 24 months after the project's commencement.

Section 67. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) and paragraphs (a), (c), and (d) of subsection (3) of section 288.11631, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

288.11631 Retention of Major League Baseball spring training baseball franchises.—

(2) CERTIFICATION PROCESS.—

(c) Each applicant certified on or after July 1, 2013, shall enter into an agreement with the department which:

1. Specifies the amount of the state incentive funding to be distributed. The amount of state incentive funding per certified applicant may not exceed \$20 million. However, if a certified applicant's facility is used by more than one spring training franchise, the maximum amount may not exceed \$50 million, and the Department of Revenue shall make distributions to the applicant pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s.~~

~~212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~

2. States the criteria that the certified applicant must meet in order to remain certified. These criteria must include a provision stating that the spring training franchise must reimburse the state for any funds received if the franchise does not comply with the terms of the contract. If bonds were issued to construct or renovate a facility for a spring training franchise, the required reimbursement must be equal to the total amount of state distributions expected to be paid from the date



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the franchise violates the agreement with the applicant through the final maturity of the bonds.

3. States that the certified applicant is subject to decertification if the certified applicant fails to comply with this section or the agreement.

4. States that the department may recover state incentive funds if the certified applicant is decertified.

5. Specifies the information that the certified applicant must report to the department.

6. Includes any provision deemed prudent by the department.

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—

(a) A certified applicant may use funds provided under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ only to:

1. Serve the public purpose of constructing or renovating a facility for a spring training franchise.

2. Pay or pledge for the payment of debt service on, or to fund debt service reserve funds, arbitrage rebate obligations, or other amounts payable with respect thereto, bonds issued for the construction or renovation of such facility, or for the reimbursement of such costs or the refinancing of bonds issued for such purposes.

(c) The Department of Revenue may not distribute funds under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ until July 1, 2016. Further, the Department of Revenue may not distribute funds to an applicant certified on or after July 1, 2013, until it receives notice from the department that:

1. The certified applicant has encumbered funds under either subparagraph (a)1. or subparagraph (a)2.; and

2. If applicable, any existing agreement with a spring



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training franchise for the use of a facility has expired.

(d)1. All certified applicants shall place unexpended state funds received pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ in a trust fund or separate account for use only as authorized in this section.

2. A certified applicant may request that the department notify the Department of Revenue to suspend further distributions of state funds made available under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ for 12 months after expiration of an existing agreement with a spring training franchise to provide the certified applicant with an opportunity to enter into a new agreement with a spring training franchise, at which time the distributions shall resume.

3. The expenditure of state funds distributed to an applicant certified after July 1, 2013, must begin within 48 months after the initial receipt of the state funds. In addition, the construction or renovation of a spring training facility must be completed within 24 months after the project's commencement.

Section 68. Subsection (1) of section 443.191, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

443.191 Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund; establishment and control.—

(1) There is established, as a separate trust fund apart from all other public funds of this state, an Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, which shall be administered by the Department of Commerce exclusively for the purposes of this chapter. The fund must consist of:

(a) All contributions and reimbursements collected under



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this chapter;

(b) Interest earned on any moneys in the fund;

(c) Any property or securities acquired through the use of moneys belonging to the fund;

(d) All earnings of these properties or securities;

(e) All money credited to this state's account in the federal Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund under 42 U.S.C. s. 1103;

(f) All money collected for penalties imposed pursuant to s. 443.151(6)(a);

(g) Advances on the amount in the federal Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund credited to the state under 42 U.S.C. s. 1321, as requested by the Governor or the Governor's designee; and

(h) All money deposited in this account as a distribution pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.e. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~

Except as otherwise provided in s. 443.1313(4), all moneys in the fund must be mingled and undivided.

Section 69. Section 571.26, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

571.26 Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust Fund.—There is hereby created the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust Fund within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to receive all moneys related to the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign. Moneys deposited in the trust fund shall be appropriated for the sole purpose of implementing the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign, except for money deposited in the trust fund pursuant



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to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.h. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.h.~~, which shall be held separately and used solely for the purposes identified in s. 571.265.

Section 70. Subsection (2) of section 571.265, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

571.265 Promotion of Florida thoroughbred breeding and of thoroughbred racing at Florida thoroughbred tracks; distribution of funds.—

(2) Funds deposited into the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust Fund pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.f. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.f.~~ shall be used by the department to encourage the agricultural activity of breeding thoroughbred racehorses in this state and to enhance thoroughbred racing conducted at thoroughbred tracks in this state as provided in this section. If the funds made available under this section are not fully used in any one fiscal year, any unused amounts shall be carried forward in the trust fund into future fiscal years and made available for distribution as provided in this section.

Section 71. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 20.60, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (8) of section 288.9935, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

288.9935 Microfinance Guarantee Program.—

(8) The department must, in the department's report required under s. 20.60(10), include an annual report on the program. The report must, at a minimum, provide:

(a) A comprehensive description of the program, including an evaluation of its application and guarantee activities, recommendations for change, and identification of any other



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state programs that overlap with the program;

(b) An assessment of the current availability of and access to credit for entrepreneurs and small businesses in this state;

(c) A summary of the financial and employment results of the entrepreneurs and small businesses receiving loan guarantees, including the number of full-time equivalent jobs created as a result of the guaranteed loans and the amount of wages paid to employees in the newly created jobs;

(d) Industry data about the borrowers, including the six-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code;

(e) The name and location of lenders that receive loan guarantees;

(f) The number of loan guarantee applications received;

(g) The number, duration, location, and amount of guarantees made;

(h) The number and amount of guaranteed loans outstanding, if any;

(i) The number and amount of guaranteed loans with payments overdue, if any;

(j) The number and amount of guaranteed loans in default, if any;

(k) The repayment history of the guaranteed loans made; and

(l) An evaluation of the program's ability to meet the financial performance measures and objectives specified in subsection (3).

Section 72. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section



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125.0104, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

125.0104 Tourist development tax; procedure for levying; authorized uses; referendum; enforcement.—

(5) AUTHORIZED USES OF REVENUE.—

(c) A county located adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean, except a county that receives revenue from taxes levied pursuant to s. 125.0108, which meets the following criteria may use up to 10 percent of the tax revenue received pursuant to this section to reimburse expenses incurred in providing public safety services, including emergency medical services as defined in s. 401.107(3), and law enforcement services, which are needed to address impacts related to increased tourism and visitors to an area. However, if taxes collected pursuant to this section are used to reimburse emergency medical services or public safety services for tourism or special events, the governing board of a county or municipality may not use such taxes to supplant the normal operating expenses of an emergency medical services department, a fire department, a sheriff's office, or a police department. To receive reimbursement, the county must:

1.a. Generate a minimum of \$10 million in annual proceeds from any tax, or any combination of taxes, authorized to be levied pursuant to this section;

b. Have at least three municipalities; and

c. Have an estimated population of less than 275,000, according to the most recent population estimate prepared pursuant to s. 186.901, excluding the inmate population; or

2. Be a fiscally constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1).



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The board of county commissioners must by majority vote approve reimbursement made pursuant to this paragraph upon receipt of a recommendation from the tourist development council.

Section 73. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (3) of section 193.624, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

193.624 Assessment of renewable energy source devices.—

(3) This section applies to the installation of a renewable energy source device installed on or after January 1, 2013, to new and existing residential real property. This section applies to a renewable energy source device installed on or after January 1, 2018, to all other real property, except when installed as part of a project planned for a location in a fiscally constrained county, as defined in s. 218.67(1), and for which an application for a comprehensive plan amendment or planned unit development zoning has been filed with the county on or before December 31, 2017.

Section 74. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (2) of section 196.182, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

196.182 Exemption of renewable energy source devices.—

(2) The exemption provided in this section does not apply to a renewable energy source device that is installed as part of a project planned for a location in a fiscally constrained county, as defined in s. 218.67(1), and for which an application for a comprehensive plan amendment or planned unit development



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zoning has been filed with the county on or before December 31, 2017.

Section 75. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.12, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

218.12 Appropriations to offset reductions in ad valorem tax revenue in fiscally constrained counties.—

(1) Beginning in fiscal year 2008-2009, the Legislature shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the implementation of revisions of Art. VII of the State Constitution approved in the special election held on January 29, 2008. The moneys appropriated for this purpose shall be distributed in January of each fiscal year among the fiscally constrained counties based on each county's proportion of the total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the implementation of the revision.

Section 76. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.125, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

218.125 Offset for tax loss associated with certain constitutional amendments affecting fiscally constrained counties.—

(1) Beginning in the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the Legislature shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as



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defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the implementation of revisions of ss. 3(f) and 4(b), Art. VII of the State Constitution which were approved in the general election held in November 2008. The moneys appropriated for this purpose shall be distributed in January of each fiscal year among the fiscally constrained counties based on each county's proportion of the total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the implementation of the revisions.

Section 77. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.135, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

218.135 Offset for tax loss associated with reductions in value of certain citrus fruit packing and processing equipment.—

(1) For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Legislature shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the implementation of s. 193.4516. The moneys appropriated for this purpose shall be distributed in January 2019 among the fiscally constrained counties based on each county's proportion of the total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the implementation of s. 193.4516.

Section 78. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.136, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

218.136 Offset for ad valorem revenue loss affecting fiscally constrained counties.—



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(1) Beginning in fiscal year 2025-2026, the Legislature shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the implementation of revisions of s. 6(a), Art. VII of the State Constitution approved in the November 2024 general election. The moneys appropriated for this purpose shall be distributed in January of each fiscal year among the fiscally constrained counties based on each county's proportion of the total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the implementation of the revision of s. 6(a), Art. VII of the State Constitution.

Section 79. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (cc) of subsection (2) of section 252.35, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

252.35 Emergency management powers; Division of Emergency Management.—

(2) The division is responsible for carrying out the provisions of ss. 252.31-252.90. In performing its duties, the division shall:

(cc) Prioritize technical assistance and training to fiscally constrained counties as defined in s. 218.67(1) on aspects of safety measures, preparedness, prevention, response, recovery, and mitigation relating to natural disasters and emergencies.

Section 80. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (4) of section 288.102, Florida



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Statutes, is reenacted to read:

288.102 Supply Chain Innovation Grant Program.—

(4) A minimum of a one-to-one match of nonstate resources, including local, federal, or private funds, to the state contribution is required. An award may not be made for a project that is receiving or using state funding from another state source or statutory program, including tax credits. The one-to-one match requirement is waived for a public entity located in a fiscally constrained county as defined in s. 218.67(1).

Section 81. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (g) of subsection (16) of section 403.064, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

403.064 Reuse of reclaimed water.—

(16) By November 1, 2021, domestic wastewater utilities that dispose of effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse water by surface water discharge shall submit to the department for review and approval a plan for eliminating nonbeneficial surface water discharge by January 1, 2032, subject to the requirements of this section. The plan must include the average gallons per day of effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse water that will no longer be discharged into surface waters and the date of such elimination, the average gallons per day of surface water discharge which will continue in accordance with the alternatives provided for in subparagraphs (a)2. and 3., and the level of treatment that the effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse water will receive before being discharged into a surface water by each alternative.

(g) This subsection does not apply to any of the following:



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1. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is located in a fiscally constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1).

2. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is located in a municipality that is entirely within a rural area of opportunity as designated pursuant to s. 288.0656.

3. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is located in a municipality that has less than \$10 million in total revenue, as determined by the municipality's most recent annual financial report submitted to the Department of Financial Services in accordance with s. 218.32.

4. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is operated by an operator of a mobile home park as defined in s. 723.003 and has a permitted capacity of less than 300,000 gallons per day.

Section 82. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in references thereto, subsections (2) and (3) of section 589.08, Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

589.08 Land acquisition restrictions.—

(2) The Florida Forest Service may receive, hold the custody of, and exercise the control of any lands, and set aside into a separate, distinct and inviolable fund, any proceeds derived from the sales of the products of such lands, the use thereof in any manner, or the sale of such lands save the 25 percent of the proceeds to be paid into the State School Fund as provided by law. The Florida Forest Service may use and apply such funds for the acquisition, use, custody, management, development, or improvement of any lands vested in or subject to the control of the Florida Forest Service. After full payment



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has been made for the purchase of a state forest to the Federal Government or other grantor, 15 percent of the gross receipts from a state forest shall be paid to the fiscally constrained county or counties, as described in s. 218.67(1), in which it is located in proportion to the acreage located in each county for use by the county or counties for school purposes.

(3) The Florida Forest Service shall pay 15 percent of the gross receipts from the Goethe State Forest to each fiscally constrained county, as described in s. 218.67(1), in which a portion of the respective forest is located in proportion to the forest acreage located in such county. The funds must be equally divided between the board of county commissioners and the school board of each fiscally constrained county.

Section 83. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (f) of subsection (1) of section 1011.62, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each district for operation of schools is not determined in the annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as follows:

(1) COMPUTATION OF THE BASIC AMOUNT TO BE INCLUDED FOR OPERATION.—The following procedure shall be followed in determining the annual allocation to each district for operation:

(f) *Small district factor*.—An additional value per full-time equivalent student membership is provided to each school



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district with a full-time equivalent student membership of fewer than 20,000 full-time equivalent students which is in a fiscally constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1). The amount of the additional value shall be specified in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 84. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to sections 218.67 and 339.2818, Florida Statutes, in references thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (6) of section 403.0741, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

403.0741 Grease waste removal and disposal.—

(6) REGULATION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—

(c) Fiscally constrained counties as described in s. 218.67(1) and small counties as defined in s. 339.2818(2) may opt out of the requirements of this section.

Section 85. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 288.0656, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (e) of subsection (7) of section 163.3177, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

163.3177 Required and optional elements of comprehensive plan; studies and surveys.—

(7)

(e) This subsection does not confer the status of rural area of opportunity, or any of the rights or benefits derived from such status, on any land area not otherwise designated as such pursuant to s. 288.0656(7).

Section 86. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 288.9961, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (a) of subsection (7) of section 288.9962, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:



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288.9962 Broadband Opportunity Program.—

(7)(a) In evaluating grant applications and awarding grants, the office must give priority to applications that:

1. Offer broadband Internet service to important community institutions, including, but not limited to, libraries, educational institutions, public safety facilities, and health care facilities;

2. Facilitate the use of telemedicine and electronic health records;

3. Serve economically distressed areas of this state, as measured by indices of unemployment, poverty, or population loss that are significantly greater than the statewide average;

4. Provide for scalability to transmission speeds of at least 100 megabits per second download and 10 megabits per second upload;

5. Include a component to actively promote the adoption of the newly available broadband Internet service in the community;

6. Provide evidence of strong support for the project from citizens, government, businesses, and institutions in the community;

7. Provide access to broadband Internet service to the greatest number of unserved households and businesses;

8. Leverage greater amounts of funding for a project from private sources; or

9. Demonstrate consistency with the strategic plan adopted under s. 288.9961.

Section 87. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 319.32, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 215.211, Florida



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Statutes, is reenacted to read:

215.211 Service charge; elimination or reduction for specified proceeds.—

(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 215.20(1) and former s. 215.20(3), the service charge provided in s. 215.20(1) and former s. 215.20(3), which is deducted from the proceeds of the taxes distributed under ss. 206.606(1), 207.026, 212.0501(6), and 319.32(5), shall be eliminated beginning July 1, 2000.

Section 88. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 339.68, Florida Statutes, in references thereto, subsections (5) and (6) of section 339.66, Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

339.66 Upgrade of arterial highways with controlled access facilities.—

(5) Any existing applicable requirements relating to department projects shall apply to projects undertaken by the department pursuant to this section. The department shall take into consideration the guidance and recommendations of any previous studies or reports relevant to the projects authorized by this section and ss. 339.67 and 339.68, including, but not limited to, the task force reports prepared pursuant to chapter 2019-43, Laws of Florida.

(6) Any existing applicable requirements relating to turnpike projects apply to projects undertaken by the Turnpike Enterprise pursuant to this section. The Turnpike Enterprise shall take into consideration the guidance and recommendations of any previous studies or reports relevant to the projects authorized by this section and ss. 339.67 and 339.68, including,



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but not limited to, the task force reports prepared pursuant to chapter 2019-43, Laws of Florida, and with respect to any extension of the Florida Turnpike from its northerly terminus in Wildwood.

Section 89. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in references thereto, subsections (4) and (6) of section 420.9072, Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

420.9072 State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program.—The State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program is created for the purpose of providing funds to counties and eligible municipalities as an incentive for the creation of local housing partnerships, to expand production of and preserve affordable housing, to further the housing element of the local government comprehensive plan specific to affordable housing, and to increase housing-related employment.

(4) Moneys in the Local Government Housing Trust Fund shall be distributed by the corporation to each approved county and eligible municipality within the county as provided in s. 420.9073. Distributions shall be allocated to the participating county and to each eligible municipality within the county according to an interlocal agreement between the county governing authority and the governing body of the eligible municipality or, if there is no interlocal agreement, according to population. The portion for each eligible municipality is computed by multiplying the total moneys earmarked for a county by a fraction, the numerator of which is the population of the eligible municipality and the denominator of which is the total population of the county. The remaining revenues shall be



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distributed to the governing body of the county.

(6) The moneys that otherwise would be distributed pursuant to s. 420.9073 to a local government that does not meet the program's requirements for receipts of such distributions shall remain in the Local Government Housing Trust Fund to be administered by the corporation.

Section 90. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (7) of section 420.9076, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

420.9076 Adoption of affordable housing incentive strategies; committees.—

(7) The governing board of the county or the eligible municipality shall notify the corporation by certified mail of its adoption of an amendment of its local housing assistance plan to incorporate local housing incentive strategies. The notice must include a copy of the approved amended plan.

(b) If a county fails to timely adopt an amended local housing assistance plan to incorporate local housing incentive strategies but an eligible municipality receiving a local housing distribution pursuant to an interlocal agreement within the county does timely adopt an amended local housing assistance plan to incorporate local housing incentive strategies, the corporation, after issuance of a notice of termination, shall thereafter distribute directly to the participating eligible municipality its share calculated in the manner provided in s. 420.9073.

Section 91. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in a



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reference thereto, subsection (2) of section 420.9079, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

420.9079 Local Government Housing Trust Fund.—

(2) The corporation shall administer the fund exclusively for the purpose of implementing the programs described in ss. 420.907-420.9076 and this section. With the exception of monitoring the activities of counties and eligible municipalities to determine local compliance with program requirements, the corporation shall not receive appropriations from the fund for administrative or personnel costs. For the purpose of implementing the compliance monitoring provisions of s. 420.9075(9), the corporation may request a maximum of one-quarter of 1 percent of the annual appropriation per state fiscal year. When such funding is appropriated, the corporation shall deduct the amount appropriated prior to calculating the local housing distribution pursuant to ss. 420.9072 and 420.9073.

Section 92. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

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

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete everything before the enacting clause
and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to rural communities; reenacting and amending s. 20.60, F.S.; revising the list of divisions and offices within the Department of Commerce to conform to changes made by the act; revising the annual program reports that must be



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3491 included in the annual report of the Department of
3492 Commerce; amending s. 163.3168, F.S.; requiring the
3493 state land planning agency to give preference for
3494 technical assistance funding to local governments
3495 located in a rural area of opportunity; requiring the
3496 agency to consult with the Office of Rural Prosperity
3497 when awarding certain funding; amending s. 201.15,
3498 F.S.; requiring that a certain sum be paid to the
3499 credit of the State Transportation Trust Fund for the
3500 exclusive use of the Florida Arterial Road
3501 Modernization Program; amending s. 202.18, F.S.;
3502 redirecting the transfer of certain communication
3503 services tax revenue; amending s. 212.20, F.S.;
3504 revising the distribution of sales and use tax revenue
3505 to include a transfer to fiscally constrained
3506 counties; amending s. 215.971, F.S.; providing
3507 construction regarding agreements funded with federal
3508 or state assistance; requiring the agency to expedite
3509 payment requests from a county, municipality, or rural
3510 area of opportunity for a specified purpose; requiring
3511 each state agency to report to the Office of Rural
3512 Prosperity by a certain date with a summary of certain
3513 information; requiring the office to summarize the
3514 information it receives for its annual report;
3515 amending s. 218.67, F.S.; revising the conditions
3516 required for a county to be considered a fiscally
3517 constrained county; authorizing eligible counties to
3518 receive a distribution of sales and use tax revenue;
3519 revising the sources that the Department of Revenue



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3520 must use to determine the amount distributed to
3521 fiscally constrained counties; revising the factors
3522 for allocation of the distribution of revenue to
3523 fiscally constrained counties; requiring that the
3524 computation and amount distributed be calculated based
3525 on a specified rounding algorithm; authorizing
3526 specified uses for the revenue; conforming a cross-
3527 reference; amending s. 288.0001, F.S.; requiring the
3528 Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the
3529 Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government
3530 Accountability (OPPAGA) to prepare a report for a
3531 specified purpose; specifying requirements for the
3532 report; providing that the Office of Economic and
3533 Demographic Research and OPPAGA must be provided with
3534 all data necessary to complete the rural communities
3535 or areas report upon request; authorizing the Office
3536 of Economic and Demographic Research and OPPAGA to
3537 collaborate on all data collection and analysis;
3538 requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic
3539 Research and OPPAGA to submit the report to the
3540 Legislature by a specified date; providing additional
3541 requirements for the report; providing for expiration;
3542 amending s. 288.001, F.S.; requiring the Florida Small
3543 Business Development Center Network to use certain
3544 funds appropriated for a specified purpose;
3545 authorizing the network to dedicate funds to
3546 facilitate certain events; amending s. 288.007, F.S.;
3547 revising which local governments and economic
3548 development organizations seeking to recruit



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3549 businesses are required to submit a specified report;
3550 creating s. 288.013, F.S.; providing legislative
3551 findings; creating the Office of Rural Prosperity
3552 within the Department of Commerce; requiring the
3553 Governor to appoint a director, subject to
3554 confirmation by the Senate; providing that the
3555 director reports to and serves at the pleasure of the
3556 secretary of the department; providing the duties of
3557 the office; requiring the office to establish by a
3558 specified date a certain number of regional rural
3559 community liaison centers across this state for a
3560 specified purpose; providing the powers, duties, and
3561 functions of the liaison centers; requiring the
3562 liaison centers, to the extent possible, to coordinate
3563 with certain entities; requiring the liaison centers
3564 to engage with the Rural Economic Development
3565 Initiative (REDI); requiring at least one staff member
3566 of a liaison center to attend the monthly meetings in
3567 person or by means of electronic communication;
3568 requiring the director of the office to submit an
3569 annual report to the Administration Commission in the
3570 Executive Office of the Governor; specifying
3571 requirements for the annual report; requiring that the
3572 annual report also be submitted to the Legislature by
3573 a specified date and published on the office's
3574 website; requiring the director of the office to
3575 attend the next Administration Commission meeting to
3576 present detailed information from the annual report;
3577 requiring OPPAGA to review the effectiveness of the



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3578 office by a certain date annually until a specified
3579 date; requiring OPPAGA to review the office at
3580 specified intervals; requiring such reviews to include
3581 certain information to be considered by the
3582 Legislature; requiring that such reports be submitted
3583 to the Legislature; requiring OPPAGA to review certain
3584 strategies from other states; requiring OPPAGA to
3585 submit to the Legislature its findings at certain
3586 intervals; creating s. 288.014, F.S.; providing
3587 legislative findings; requiring the Office of Rural
3588 Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants
3589 Program to provide block grants to eligible
3590 communities; requiring the Office of Economic and
3591 Demographic Research to certify to the Office of Rural
3592 Prosperity certain information by a specified date;
3593 defining the term "growth-impeded"; requiring the
3594 Office of Economic and Demographic Research to certify
3595 annually that a county remains growth-impeded until
3596 such county has positive population growth for a
3597 specified amount of time; providing that such county,
3598 after 3 consecutive years of population growth, is
3599 eligible to participate in the program for 1
3600 additional year; requiring a county eligible for the
3601 program to enter into an agreement with the Office of
3602 Rural Prosperity in order to receive the block grant;
3603 giving such counties broad authority to design their
3604 specific plans; prohibiting the Office of Rural
3605 Prosperity from determining how such counties
3606 implement the block grant; requiring regional rural



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3607 community liaison center staff to provide assistance,
3608 upon request; requiring participating counties to
3609 report annually to the Office of Rural Prosperity with
3610 certain information; providing that a participating
3611 county receives a specified amount from funds
3612 appropriated to the program; requiring participating
3613 counties to make all attempts to limit the amount
3614 spent on administrative costs; authorizing
3615 participating counties to contribute other funds for
3616 block grant purposes; requiring participating counties
3617 to hire a renaissance coordinator; providing that
3618 funds from the block grant may be used to hire the
3619 renaissance coordinator; providing the
3620 responsibilities of the renaissance coordinator;
3621 requiring the regional rural community liaison center
3622 staff to provide assistance and training to the
3623 renaissance coordinator, upon request; requiring
3624 participating counties to design a plan to make
3625 targeted investments to achieve population growth and
3626 increase economic vitality; providing requirements for
3627 such plans; requiring participating counties to
3628 develop intergovernmental agreements with certain
3629 entities in order to implement the plan; requiring the
3630 Auditor General to conduct an operational audit every
3631 2 years for a specified purpose; requiring the Office
3632 of Economic and Demographic Research to provide an
3633 annual report on a specified date of renaissance block
3634 grant recipients by county; providing requirements for
3635 the annual report; requiring that the report be



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3636 submitted to the Governor and the Legislature;
3637 prohibiting funds appropriated for the program from
3638 being subject to reversion; providing for an
3639 expiration of the section; creating s. 288.0175, F.S.;
3640 creating the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology
3641 Grant Program within the Office of Rural Prosperity;
3642 defining terms; requiring the office to contract with
3643 one or more smart technology lead organizations to
3644 administer a grant program for a specified purpose;
3645 providing the criteria for such contracts; requiring
3646 that projects funded by the grant program be included
3647 in the office's annual report; amending s. 288.018,
3648 F.S.; requiring the office, rather than the Department
3649 of Commerce, to establish a grant program to provide
3650 funding for regional economic development
3651 organizations; revising who may apply for such grants;
3652 providing that a grant award may not exceed a certain
3653 amount in a year; providing exceptions to a provision
3654 that the department may expend a certain amount for a
3655 certain purpose; amending s. 288.019, F.S.; revising
3656 the program criteria and procedures that agencies and
3657 organizations of REDI are required to review; revising
3658 the list of impacts each REDI agency and organization
3659 must consider in its review; requiring REDI agencies
3660 and organizations to develop a proposal for
3661 modifications which minimizes the financial and
3662 resource impacts to a rural community; requiring that
3663 ranking of evaluation criteria and scoring procedures
3664 be used only when ranking is a component of the



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3665 program; requiring that match requirements be waived
3666 or reduced for rural communities; providing that
3667 donations of land may be treated as in-kind matches;
3668 requiring each agency and organization that applies
3669 for or receives federal funding to request federal
3670 approval to waive or reduce the financial match
3671 requirements, if any, for projects in rural
3672 communities; requiring that proposals be submitted to
3673 the office, rather than the department; requiring each
3674 REDI agency and organization to modify rules or
3675 policies as necessary to reflect the finalized
3676 proposal; requiring that information about authorized
3677 waivers be included on the office's online rural
3678 resource directory; conforming a cross-reference;
3679 amending s. 288.021, F.S.; requiring, when
3680 practicable, the economic development liaison to serve
3681 as the agency representative for REDI; amending s.
3682 288.065, F.S.; defining the term "unit of local
3683 government"; requiring the office to include in its
3684 annual report certain information about the Rural
3685 Community Development Revolving Loan Fund; conforming
3686 provisions to changes made by the act; amending s.
3687 288.0655, F.S.; revising the list of grants that may
3688 be awarded by the office; deleting the authorization
3689 for local match requirements to be waived for a
3690 catalyst site; revising the list of departments the
3691 office must consult with to certify applicants;
3692 requiring the office to include certain information
3693 about the Rural Infrastructure Trust Fund in its



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3694 annual report; conforming provisions to changes made
3695 by the act; amending s. 288.0656, F.S.; providing
3696 legislative findings; providing that REDI is created
3697 within the Office of Rural Prosperity, rather than the
3698 department; deleting the definitions of the terms
3699 "catalyst project" and "catalyst site"; requiring that
3700 an alternate for each designated deputy secretary be a
3701 deputy secretary or higher-level staff person;
3702 requiring that the names of such alternates be
3703 reported to the director of the office; requiring at
3704 least one rural liaison to participate in REDI
3705 meetings; requiring REDI to meet at least each month;
3706 deleting a provision that a rural area of opportunity
3707 may designate catalyst projects; requiring REDI to
3708 submit a certain report to the office, rather than to
3709 the department; specifying requirements for such
3710 report; conforming provisions to changes made by the
3711 act; repealing s. 288.06561, F.S., relating to
3712 reduction or waiver of financial match requirements;
3713 amending s. 288.0657, F.S.; requiring the office,
3714 rather than the department, to provide grants to
3715 assist rural communities; providing that such grants
3716 may be used for specified purposes; requiring the
3717 rural liaison to assist those applying for such
3718 grants; providing that marketing grants may include
3719 certain funding; amending s. 288.1226, F.S.; revising
3720 required components of the 4-year marketing plan of
3721 the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation;
3722 repealing s. 288.12266, F.S., relating to the Targeted



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3723 Marketing Assistance Program; amending s. 288.9961,
3724 F.S.; revising the definition of the term
3725 "underserved"; requiring the office to consult with
3726 regional rural community liaison centers on
3727 development of a certain strategic plan; requiring
3728 rural liaisons to assist rural communities with
3729 providing feedback in applying for federal grants for
3730 broadband Internet services; requiring the office to
3731 submit reports with specified information to the
3732 Governor and the Legislature within certain
3733 timeframes; repealing s. 290.06561, F.S., relating to
3734 designation of rural enterprise zones as catalyst
3735 sites; amending s. 319.32, F.S.; revising the
3736 disposition of fees collected for certain title
3737 certificates; amending s. 334.044, F.S.; revising the
3738 powers and duties of the Department of Transportation;
3739 amending s. 339.0801, F.S.; revising the allocation of
3740 funds received in the State Transportation Trust Fund;
3741 amending s. 339.2816, F.S.; requiring, rather than
3742 authorizing, that certain funds received from the
3743 State Transportation Trust Fund be used for the Small
3744 County Road Assistance Program; requiring the
3745 department to use other additional revenues for the
3746 Small County Road Assistance Program; providing an
3747 exception from the prohibition against funding
3748 capacity improvements on county roads; amending s.
3749 339.2817, F.S.; revising the criteria that the
3750 department must consider for evaluating projects for
3751 County Incentive Grant Program assistance; authorizing



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3752 a county located either wholly or partially within the
3753 Everglades Agricultural Area to request a specified
3754 percent of project costs for eligible projects;
3755 amending s. 339.2818, F.S.; deleting a provision that
3756 the funds allocated under the Small County Outreach
3757 Program are in addition to the Small County Road
3758 Assistance Program; deleting a provision that a local
3759 government within the Everglades Agricultural Area,
3760 the Peace River Basin, or the Suwannee River Basin may
3761 compete for additional funding; conforming provisions
3762 to changes made by the act; making a technical change;
3763 amending s. 339.68, F.S.; providing legislative
3764 findings; creating the Florida Arterial Road
3765 Modernization Program within the Department of
3766 Commerce; defining the term "rural community";
3767 requiring the department to allocate from the State
3768 Transportation Trust Fund a minimum sum in each fiscal
3769 year to fund the program; providing that such funding
3770 is in addition to any other funding provided to the
3771 program; providing criteria the department must use to
3772 prioritize projects for funding under the program;
3773 requiring the department to submit a report to the
3774 Governor and the Legislature by a specified date;
3775 requiring that such report be submitted every 2 years
3776 thereafter; providing the criteria for such report;
3777 requiring the Department of Transportation to allocate
3778 additional funds to implement the Small County Road
3779 Assistance Program and amend the tentative work
3780 program for a specified number of fiscal years;



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3781 requiring the department to submit a budget amendment
3782 before the adoption of the work program; requiring the
3783 department to allocate sufficient funds to implement
3784 the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program;
3785 requiring the department to amend the current
3786 tentative work program for a specified number of
3787 fiscal years to include the program's projects;
3788 requiring the department to submit a budget amendment
3789 before the implementation of the program; requiring
3790 that the revenue increases in the State Transportation
3791 Trust Fund which are derived from the act be used to
3792 fund the work program; amending s. 381.402, F.S.;
3793 revising eligibility requirements for the Florida
3794 Reimbursement Assistance for Medical Education
3795 Program; revising the proof required to make payments
3796 for participation in the program; creating s. 381.403,
3797 F.S.; providing legislative findings; creating the
3798 Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant
3799 Program within the Department of Health for a
3800 specified purpose; defining terms; requiring the
3801 department to award grants under the program to
3802 physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous
3803 advanced practice registered nurses intending to open
3804 new practices or practice locations in qualifying
3805 rural areas; specifying eligibility criteria for the
3806 grants; requiring the department, by a specified date,
3807 to create an application process for applying for
3808 grants under the program; specifying requirements for
3809 the application and application process; authorizing



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3810 the department, subject to specific appropriation, to
3811 award grants under the program; specifying limitations
3812 on the awarding of grants; specifying expenses for
3813 which grant funds are authorized and prohibited;
3814 requiring the department to enter into a contract with
3815 each grant recipient; specifying requirements for the
3816 contracts; authorizing the department to adopt rules;
3817 requiring the department, beginning on a specified
3818 date and annually thereafter, to provide a report
3819 containing specified information to the Governor and
3820 the Legislature; providing for future legislative
3821 review and repeal of the program; creating s.
3822 381.9856, F.S.; creating the Stroke, Cardiac, and
3823 Obstetric Response and Education Grant Program within
3824 the Department of Health; specifying the purpose of
3825 the program; defining terms; requiring the department
3826 to award grants under the program to certain entities
3827 meeting specified criteria; requiring the department
3828 to give priority to certain applicants; limiting
3829 individual grants to a specified amount per year;
3830 requiring grant recipients to submit quarterly reports
3831 to the department; requiring the department to monitor
3832 program implementation and outcomes; requiring the
3833 department to submit an annual report to the Governor
3834 and the Legislature by a specified date; authorizing
3835 the department to adopt rules; providing construction;
3836 providing for future legislative review and repeal of
3837 the program; amending s. 395.6061, F.S.; providing
3838 that rural hospital capital grant improvement program



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3839 funding may be awarded to rural hospitals to establish
3840 mobile care units and telehealth kiosks for specified
3841 purposes; defining terms; amending s. 420.9073, F.S.;
3842 revising the calculation of guaranteed amounts
3843 distributed from the Local Government Housing Trust
3844 Fund; reenacting and amending s. 420.9075, F.S.;
3845 authorizing a certain percentage of the funds made
3846 available in each county and eligible municipality
3847 from the local housing distribution to be used to
3848 preserve multifamily affordable rental housing;
3849 specifying what such funds may be used for; providing
3850 an expiration; amending s. 1001.451, F.S.; revising
3851 the services required to be provided by regional
3852 consortium service organizations when such services
3853 are found to be necessary and appropriate by such
3854 organizations' boards of directors; revising the
3855 allocation that certain regional consortium service
3856 organizations are eligible to receive from the General
3857 Appropriations Act; requiring each regional consortium
3858 service organization to submit an annual report to the
3859 Department of Education; requiring that unexpended
3860 amounts in certain funds be carried forward; requiring
3861 each regional consortium service organization to
3862 provide quarterly financial reports to member
3863 districts; requiring member districts to designate a
3864 district to serve as a fiscal agent for certain
3865 purposes; providing for compensation of the fiscal
3866 agent district; requiring regional consortium service
3867 organizations to retain all funds received from grants



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3868 or contracted services to cover indirect or
3869 administrative costs associated with the provision of
3870 such services; requiring the regional consortium
3871 service organization board of directors to determine
3872 products and services provided by the organization;
3873 requiring a regional consortium service organization
3874 board of directors to recommend the establishment of
3875 positions and appointments to a fiscal agent district;
3876 requiring that personnel be employed under specified
3877 personnel policies; authorizing the regional
3878 consortium service organization board of directors to
3879 recommend a salary schedule for personnel; authorizing
3880 regional consortium service organizations to purchase
3881 or lease property and facilities essential to their
3882 operations; providing for the distribution of revenue
3883 if a regional consortium service organization is
3884 dissolved; deleting a provision requiring applications
3885 for incentive grants; authorizing regional consortium
3886 service organization boards of directors to contract
3887 to provide services to nonmember districts; requiring
3888 that a fund balance be established for specified
3889 purposes; deleting a requirement for the use of
3890 certain funds; authorizing a regional consortium
3891 service organization to administer a specified
3892 program; creating s. 1001.4511, F.S.; creating the
3893 Regional Consortia Service Organization Supplemental
3894 Services Program; providing the purpose of the
3895 program; authorizing funds to be used for specified
3896 purposes; requiring each regional consortium service



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3897 organization to report the distribution of funds
3898 annually to the Legislature; providing for the
3899 carryforward of funds; providing appropriations;
3900 creating s. 1009.635, F.S.; establishing the Rural
3901 Incentive for Professional Educators Program within
3902 the Department of Education; requiring the program to
3903 provide financial assistance for the repayment of
3904 student loans to eligible participants who establish
3905 permanent residency and employment in rural
3906 communities; providing that eligible participants may
3907 receive up to a certain amount in total student loan
3908 repayment assistance over a certain timeframe;
3909 requiring the department to verify certain information
3910 of participants in the program before it disburses
3911 awards; providing that the program is administered
3912 through the Office of Student Financial Assistance
3913 within the department; requiring the department to
3914 develop procedures and monitor compliance; requiring
3915 the State Board of Education to adopt rules by a
3916 certain date; amending s. 1013.62, F.S.; revising the
3917 calculation methodology to determine the amount of
3918 revenue that a school district must distribute to each
3919 eligible charter school; amending s. 1013.64, F.S.;
3920 revising conditions under which a school district may
3921 receive funding on an approved construction project;
3922 providing appropriations for specified purposes;
3923 amending ss. 163.3187, 212.205, 257.191, 257.193,
3924 265.283, 288.11621, 288.11631, 443.191, 571.26, and
3925 571.265, F.S.; conforming cross-references and



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3926 provisions to changes made by the act; reenacting s.
3927 288.9935(8), F.S., relating to the Microfinance
3928 Guarantee Program, to incorporate the amendment made
3929 to s. 20.60, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting
3930 ss. 125.0104(5)(c), 193.624(3), 196.182(2), 218.12(1),
3931 218.125(1), 218.135(1), 218.136(1), 252.35(2)(cc),
3932 288.102(4), 403.064(16)(g), 589.08(2) and (3), and
3933 1011.62(1)(f), F.S., relating to authorized uses of
3934 tourist development tax; applicability of assessments
3935 of renewable energy source devices; application of
3936 exemptions of renewable energy source devices;
3937 appropriations to offset reductions in ad valorem tax
3938 revenue in fiscally constrained counties; offset for
3939 tax loss associated with certain constitutional
3940 amendments affecting fiscally constrained counties;
3941 offset for tax loss associated with reductions in
3942 value of certain citrus fruit packing and processing
3943 equipment; offset for ad valorem revenue loss
3944 affecting fiscally constrained counties; Division of
3945 Emergency Management powers; one-to-one match
3946 requirement under the Supply Chain Innovation Grant
3947 Program; applicability of provisions related to reuse
3948 of reclaimed water; land acquisition restrictions; and
3949 funds for operation of schools, respectively, to
3950 incorporate the amendment made to s. 218.67, F.S., in
3951 references thereto; reenacting s. 403.0741(6)(c),
3952 F.S., relating to grease waste removal and disposal,
3953 to incorporate the amendments made to ss. 218.67 and
3954 339.2818, F.S., in references thereto; reenacting s.



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3955 163.3177(7)(e), F.S., relating to required and
3956 optional elements of comprehensive plans and studies
3957 and surveys, to incorporate the amendment made to s.
3958 288.0656, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s.
3959 288.9962(7)(a), F.S., relating to the Broadband
3960 Opportunity Program, to incorporate the amendment made
3961 to s. 288.9961, F.S., in a reference thereto;
3962 reenacting s. 215.211(1), F.S., relating to service
3963 charges and elimination or reduction for specified
3964 proceeds, to incorporate the amendment made to s.
3965 319.32, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s.
3966 339.66(5) and (6), F.S., relating to upgrades of
3967 arterial highways with controlled access facilities,
3968 to incorporate the amendment made to s. 339.68, F.S.,
3969 in references thereto; reenacting ss. 420.9072(4) and
3970 (6), 420.9076(7)(b), and 420.9079(2), F.S., relating
3971 to the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program,
3972 adoption of affordable housing incentive strategies
3973 and committees, and the Local Government Housing Trust
3974 Fund, respectively, to incorporate the amendment made
3975 to s. 420.9073, F.S., in references thereto; providing
3976 an effective date.