

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to rural communities; amending s.
3 20.60, F.S.; revising the list of divisions and
4 offices within the Department of Commerce to conform
5 to changes made by the act; revising the annual
6 program reports that must be included in the annual
7 report of the Department of Commerce; amending s.
8 163.3168, F.S.; requiring the state land planning
9 agency to give preference for technical assistance
10 funding to local governments located in a rural area
11 of opportunity; requiring the agency to consult with
12 the Office of Rural Prosperity when awarding certain
13 funding; amending s. 201.15, F.S.; requiring that a
14 certain sum be paid to the credit of the State
15 Transportation Trust Fund for the exclusive use of the
16 Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program; amending
17 s. 202.18, F.S.; redirecting the transfer of certain
18 communication services tax revenue; amending s.
19 212.20, F.S.; revising the distribution of sales and
20 use tax revenue to include a transfer to fiscally
21 constrained counties; amending s. 215.971, F.S.;
22 providing construction regarding agreements funded
23 with federal or state assistance; requiring each state
24 agency to report to the Office of Rural Prosperity by
25 a certain date with a summary of certain information;

26 requiring the office to summarize the information it
27 receives for its annual report; amending s. 218.67,
28 F.S.; revising the conditions required for a county to
29 be considered a fiscally constrained county;
30 authorizing eligible counties to receive a
31 distribution of sales and use tax revenue; revising
32 the sources that the Department of Revenue must use to
33 determine the amount distributed to fiscally
34 constrained counties; revising the factors for
35 allocation of the distribution of revenue to fiscally
36 constrained counties; requiring that the computation
37 and amount distributed be calculated based on a
38 specified rounding algorithm; authorizing specified
39 uses for the revenue; conforming a cross-reference;
40 amending s. 288.0001, F.S.; requiring the Office of
41 Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of
42 Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
43 (OPPAGA) to prepare a report for a specified purpose;
44 specifying requirements for the report; providing that
45 the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and
46 OPPAGA must be provided with all data necessary to
47 complete the rural communities or areas report upon
48 request; authorizing the Office of Economic and
49 Demographic Research and OPPAGA to collaborate on all
50 data collection and analysis; requiring the Office of

51 Economic and Demographic Research and OPPAGA to submit
52 the report to the Legislature by a specified date;
53 providing additional requirements for the report;
54 providing for expiration; amending s. 288.001, F.S.;
55 requiring the Florida Small Business Development
56 Center Network to use certain funds appropriated for a
57 specified purpose; authorizing the network to dedicate
58 funds to facilitate certain events; amending s.
59 288.007, F.S.; revising which local governments and
60 economic development organizations seeking to recruit
61 businesses are required to submit a specified report;
62 creating s. 288.013, F.S.; providing legislative
63 findings; creating the Office of Rural Prosperity
64 within the Department of Commerce; requiring the
65 Governor to appoint a director, subject to
66 confirmation by the Senate; providing that the
67 director reports to and serves at the pleasure of the
68 secretary of the department; providing the duties of
69 the office; requiring the office to establish by a
70 specified date a certain number of regional rural
71 community liaison centers across this state for a
72 specified purpose; providing the powers, duties, and
73 functions of the liaison centers; requiring the
74 liaison centers, to the extent possible, to coordinate
75 with certain entities; requiring the liaison centers

76 | to engage with the Rural Economic Development
77 | Initiative (REDI); requiring at least one staff member
78 | of a liaison center to attend the monthly meetings in
79 | person or by means of electronic communication;
80 | requiring the director of the office to submit an
81 | annual report to the Administration Commission in the
82 | Executive Office of the Governor; specifying
83 | requirements for the annual report; requiring that the
84 | annual report also be submitted to the Legislature by
85 | a specified date and published on the office's
86 | website; requiring the director of the office to
87 | attend the next Administration Commission meeting to
88 | present detailed information from the annual report;
89 | requiring OPPAGA to review the effectiveness of the
90 | office by a certain date annually until a specified
91 | date; requiring OPPAGA to review the office at
92 | specified intervals; requiring such reviews to include
93 | certain information to be considered by the
94 | Legislature; requiring that such reports be submitted
95 | to the Legislature; requiring OPPAGA to review certain
96 | strategies from other states; requiring OPPAGA to
97 | submit to the Legislature its findings at certain
98 | intervals; creating s. 288.014, F.S.; providing
99 | legislative findings; requiring the Office of Rural
100 | Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants

101 Program to provide block grants to eligible
102 communities; requiring the Office of Economic and
103 Demographic Research to certify to the Office of Rural
104 Prosperity certain information by a specified date;
105 defining the term "growth-impeded"; requiring the
106 Office of Economic and Demographic Research to certify
107 annually that a county remains growth-impeded until
108 such county has positive population growth for a
109 specified amount of time; providing that such county,
110 after 3 consecutive years of population growth, is
111 eligible to participate in the program for 1
112 additional year; requiring a county eligible for the
113 program to enter into an agreement with the Office of
114 Rural Prosperity in order to receive the block grant;
115 giving such counties broad authority to design their
116 specific plans; prohibiting the Office of Rural
117 Prosperity from determining how such counties
118 implement the block grant; requiring regional rural
119 community liaison center staff to provide assistance,
120 upon request; requiring participating counties to
121 report annually to the Office of Rural Prosperity with
122 certain information; providing that a participating
123 county receives a specified amount from funds
124 appropriated to the program; requiring participating
125 counties to make all attempts to limit the amount

126 | spent on administrative costs; authorizing
127 | participating counties to contribute other funds for
128 | block grant purposes; requiring participating counties
129 | to hire a renaissance coordinator; providing that
130 | funds from the block grant may be used to hire the
131 | renaissance coordinator; providing the
132 | responsibilities of the renaissance coordinator;
133 | requiring the regional rural community liaison center
134 | staff to provide assistance and training to the
135 | renaissance coordinator, upon request; requiring
136 | participating counties to design a plan to make
137 | targeted investments to achieve population growth and
138 | increase economic vitality; providing requirements for
139 | such plans; requiring participating counties to
140 | develop intergovernmental agreements with certain
141 | entities in order to implement the plan; requiring the
142 | Auditor General to conduct an operational audit every
143 | 2 years for a specified purpose; requiring the Office
144 | of Economic and Demographic Research to provide an
145 | annual report on a specified date of renaissance block
146 | grant recipients by county; providing requirements for
147 | the annual report; requiring that the report be
148 | submitted to the Governor and the Legislature;
149 | prohibiting funds appropriated for the program from
150 | being subject to reversion; providing for an

151 expiration of the section; creating s. 288.0175, F.S.;

152 creating the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology

153 Grant Program within the Office of Rural Prosperity;

154 defining terms; requiring the office to contract with

155 one or more smart technology lead organizations to

156 administer a grant program for a specified purpose;

157 providing the criteria for such contracts; requiring

158 that projects funded by the grant program be included

159 in the office's annual report; amending s. 288.018,

160 F.S.; requiring the office, rather than the Department

161 of Commerce, to establish a grant program to provide

162 funding for regional economic development

163 organizations; revising who may apply for such grants;

164 providing that a grant award may not exceed a certain

165 amount in a year; providing exceptions to a provision

166 that the department may expend a certain amount for a

167 certain purpose; amending s. 288.019, F.S.; revising

168 the program criteria and procedures that agencies and

169 organizations of REDI are required to review; revising

170 the list of impacts each REDI agency and organization

171 must consider in its review; requiring REDI agencies

172 and organizations to develop a proposal for

173 modifications which minimizes the financial and

174 resource impacts to a rural community; requiring that

175 ranking of evaluation criteria and scoring procedures

176 be used only when ranking is a component of the
177 program; requiring that match requirements be waived
178 or reduced for rural communities; providing that
179 donations of land may be treated as in-kind matches;
180 requiring each agency and organization that applies
181 for or receives federal funding to request federal
182 approval to waive or reduce the financial match
183 requirements, if any, for projects in rural
184 communities; requiring that proposals be submitted to
185 the office, rather than the department; requiring each
186 REDI agency and organization to modify rules or
187 policies as necessary to reflect the finalized
188 proposal; requiring that information about authorized
189 waivers be included on the office's online rural
190 resource directory; conforming a cross-reference;
191 amending s. 288.021, F.S.; requiring, when
192 practicable, the economic development liaison to serve
193 as the agency representative for REDI; amending s.
194 288.065, F.S.; defining the term "unit of local
195 government"; requiring the office to include in its
196 annual report certain information about the Rural
197 Community Development Revolving Loan Fund; conforming
198 provisions to changes made by the act; amending s.
199 288.0655, F.S.; revising the list of grants that may
200 be awarded by the office; deleting the authorization

201 for local match requirements to be waived for a
202 catalyst site; revising the list of departments the
203 office must consult with to certify applicants;
204 requiring the office to include certain information
205 about the Rural Infrastructure Trust Fund in its
206 annual report; conforming provisions to changes made
207 by the act; amending s. 288.0656, F.S.; providing
208 legislative findings; providing that REDI is created
209 within the Office of Rural Prosperity, rather than the
210 department; deleting the definitions of the terms
211 "catalyst project" and "catalyst site"; requiring that
212 an alternate for each designated deputy secretary be a
213 deputy secretary or higher-level staff person;
214 requiring that the names of such alternates be
215 reported to the director of the office; requiring at
216 least one rural liaison to participate in REDI
217 meetings; requiring REDI to meet at least each month;
218 deleting a provision that a rural area of opportunity
219 may designate catalyst projects; requiring REDI to
220 submit a certain report to the office, rather than to
221 the department; specifying requirements for such
222 report; conforming provisions to changes made by the
223 act; repealing s. 288.06561, F.S., relating to
224 reduction or waiver of financial match requirements;
225 amending s. 288.0657, F.S.; requiring the office,

226 rather than the department, to provide grants to
227 assist rural communities; providing that such grants
228 may be used for specified purposes; requiring the
229 rural liaison to assist those applying for such
230 grants; providing that marketing grants may include
231 certain funding; amending s. 288.9961, F.S.; revising
232 the definition of the term "underserved"; requiring
233 the office to consult with regional rural community
234 liaison centers on development of a certain strategic
235 plan; requiring rural liaisons to assist rural
236 communities with providing feedback in applying for
237 federal grants for broadband Internet services;
238 requiring the office to submit reports with specified
239 information to the Governor and the Legislature within
240 certain timeframes; repealing s. 290.06561, F.S.,
241 relating to designation of rural enterprise zones as
242 catalyst sites; amending s. 319.32, F.S.; revising the
243 disposition of fees collected for certain title
244 certificates; amending s. 334.044, F.S.; revising the
245 powers and duties of the Department of Transportation;
246 amending s. 339.0801, F.S.; revising the allocation of
247 funds received in the State Transportation Trust Fund;
248 amending s. 339.2816, F.S.; requiring, rather than
249 authorizing, that certain funds received from the
250 State Transportation Trust Fund be used for the Small

251 County Road Assistance Program; requiring the
252 department to use other additional revenues for the
253 Small County Road Assistance Program; providing an
254 exception from the prohibition against funding
255 capacity improvements on county roads; amending s.
256 339.2818, F.S.; deleting a provision that the funds
257 allocated under the Small County Outreach Program are
258 in addition to the Small County Road Assistance
259 Program; deleting a provision that a local government
260 within the Everglades Agricultural Area, the Peace
261 River Basin, or the Suwannee River Basin may compete
262 for additional funding; conforming provisions to
263 changes made by the act; making a technical change;
264 amending s. 339.68, F.S.; providing legislative
265 findings; creating the Florida Arterial Road
266 Modernization Program within the Department of
267 Commerce; defining the term "rural community";
268 requiring the department to allocate from the State
269 Transportation Trust Fund a minimum sum in each fiscal
270 year to fund the program; providing that such funding
271 is in addition to any other funding provided to the
272 program; providing criteria the department must use to
273 prioritize projects for funding under the program;
274 requiring the department to submit a report to the
275 Governor and the Legislature by a specified date;

276 requiring that such report be submitted every 2 years
277 thereafter; providing the criteria for such report;
278 requiring the Department of Transportation to allocate
279 additional funds to implement the Small County Road
280 Assistance Program and amend the tentative work
281 program for a specified number of fiscal years;
282 requiring the department to submit a budget amendment
283 before the adoption of the work program; requiring the
284 department to allocate sufficient funds to implement
285 the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program;
286 requiring the department to amend the current
287 tentative work program for a specified number of
288 fiscal years to include the program's projects;
289 requiring the department to submit a budget amendment
290 before the implementation of the program; requiring
291 that the revenue increases in the State Transportation
292 Trust Fund which are derived from the act be used to
293 fund the work program; creating s. 381.403, F.S.;
294 providing legislative findings; creating the Rural
295 Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant Program
296 within the Department of Health for a specified
297 purpose; defining terms; requiring the department to
298 award grants under the program to physicians and
299 autonomous advanced practice registered nurses
300 intending to open new practices or practice locations

301 in qualifying rural areas; specifying eligibility
302 criteria for the grants; requiring the department, by
303 a specified date, to create an application process for
304 applying for grants under the program; specifying
305 requirements for the application and application
306 process; authorizing the department, subject to
307 specific appropriation, to award grants under the
308 program; specifying limitations on the awarding of
309 grants; specifying expenses for which grant funds are
310 authorized and prohibited; requiring the department to
311 enter into a contract with each grant recipient;
312 specifying requirements for the contracts; authorizing
313 the department to adopt rules; requiring the
314 department, beginning on a specified date and annually
315 thereafter, to provide a report containing specified
316 information to the Governor and the Legislature;
317 providing for future legislative review and repeal of
318 the program; creating s. 381.9856, F.S.; creating the
319 Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and Education
320 Grant Program within the Department of Health;
321 specifying the purpose of the program; defining terms;
322 requiring the department to award grants under the
323 program to certain entities meeting specified
324 criteria; requiring the department to give priority to
325 certain applicants; limiting individual grants to a

326 specified amount per year; requiring grant recipients
327 to submit quarterly reports to the department;
328 requiring the department to monitor program
329 implementation and outcomes; requiring the department
330 to submit an annual report to the Governor and the
331 Legislature by a specified date; authorizing the
332 department to adopt rules; providing construction;
333 providing for future legislative review and repeal of
334 the program; amending s. 395.6061, F.S.; providing
335 that rural hospital capital grant improvement program
336 funding may be awarded to rural hospitals to establish
337 mobile care units and telehealth kiosks for specified
338 purposes; defining terms; amending s. 420.9073, F.S.;
339 revising the calculation of guaranteed amounts
340 distributed from the Local Government Housing Trust
341 Fund; reenacting and amending s. 420.9075, F.S.;
342 authorizing a certain percentage of the funds made
343 available in each county and eligible municipality
344 from the local housing distribution to be used to
345 preserve multifamily affordable rental housing;
346 specifying what such funds may be used for; providing
347 an expiration; amending s. 1001.451, F.S.; revising
348 the services required to be provided by regional
349 consortium service organizations when such services
350 are found to be necessary and appropriate by such

351 organizations' boards of directors; revising the
352 allocation that certain regional consortium service
353 organizations are eligible to receive from the General
354 Appropriations Act; requiring each regional consortium
355 service organization to submit an annual report to the
356 Department of Education; requiring that unexpended
357 amounts in certain funds be carried forward; requiring
358 each regional consortium service organization to
359 provide quarterly financial reports to member
360 districts; requiring member districts to designate a
361 district to serve as a fiscal agent for certain
362 purposes; providing for compensation of the fiscal
363 agent district; requiring regional consortium service
364 organizations to retain all funds received from grants
365 or contracted services to cover indirect or
366 administrative costs associated with the provision of
367 such services; requiring the regional consortium
368 service organization board of directors to determine
369 products and services provided by the organization;
370 requiring a regional consortium service organization
371 board of directors to recommend the establishment of
372 positions and appointments to a fiscal agent district;
373 requiring that personnel be employed under specified
374 personnel policies; authorizing the regional
375 consortium service organization board of directors to

376 recommend a salary schedule for personnel; authorizing
377 regional consortium service organizations to purchase
378 or lease property and facilities essential to their
379 operations; providing for the distribution of revenue
380 if a regional consortium service organization is
381 dissolved; deleting a provision requiring applications
382 for incentive grants; authorizing regional consortium
383 service organization boards of directors to contract
384 to provide services to nonmember districts; requiring
385 that a fund balance be established for specified
386 purposes; deleting a requirement for the use of
387 certain funds; authorizing a regional consortium
388 service organization to administer a specified
389 program; creating s. 1001.4511, F.S.; creating the
390 Regional Consortia Service Organization Supplemental
391 Services Program; providing the purpose of the
392 program; authorizing funds to be used for specified
393 purposes; requiring each regional consortium service
394 organization to report the distribution of funds
395 annually to the Legislature; providing for the
396 carryforward of funds; providing appropriations;
397 creating s. 1009.635, F.S.; establishing the Rural
398 Incentive for Professional Educators Program within
399 the Department of Education; requiring the program to
400 provide financial assistance for the repayment of

401 student loans to eligible participants who establish
402 permanent residency and employment in rural
403 communities; providing that eligible participants may
404 receive up to a certain amount in total student loan
405 repayment assistance over a certain timeframe;
406 requiring the department to verify certain information
407 of participants in the program before it disburses
408 awards; providing that the program is administered
409 through the Office of Student Financial Assistance
410 within the department; requiring the department to
411 develop procedures and monitor compliance; requiring
412 the State Board of Education to adopt rules by a
413 certain date; amending s. 1013.62, F.S.; revising the
414 calculation methodology to determine the amount of
415 revenue that a school district must distribute to each
416 eligible charter school; amending s. 1013.64, F.S.;
417 revising conditions under which a school district may
418 receive funding on an approved construction project;
419 providing appropriations for specified purposes;
420 amending ss. 163.3187, 212.205, 257.191, 257.193,
421 265.283, 288.11621, 288.11631, 443.191, 571.26, and
422 571.265, F.S.; conforming cross-references and
423 provisions to changes made by the act; reenacting s.
424 288.9935(8), F.S., relating to the Microfinance
425 Guarantee Program, to incorporate the amendment made

426 to s. 20.60, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting
427 ss. 125.0104(5)(c), 193.624(3), 196.182(2), 218.12(1),
428 218.125(1), 218.135(1), 218.136(1), 252.35(2)(cc),
429 288.102(4), 403.064(16)(g), 589.08(2) and (3), and
430 1011.62(1)(f), F.S., relating to authorized uses of
431 tourist development tax; applicability of assessments
432 of renewable energy source devices; application of
433 exemptions of renewable energy source devices;
434 appropriations to offset reductions in ad valorem tax
435 revenue in fiscally constrained counties; offset for
436 tax loss associated with certain constitutional
437 amendments affecting fiscally constrained counties;
438 offset for tax loss associated with reductions in
439 value of certain citrus fruit packing and processing
440 equipment; offset for ad valorem revenue loss
441 affecting fiscally constrained counties; Division of
442 Emergency Management powers; one-to-one match
443 requirement under the Supply Chain Innovation Grant
444 Program; applicability of provisions related to reuse
445 of reclaimed water; land acquisition restrictions; and
446 funds for operation of schools, respectively, to
447 incorporate the amendment made to s. 218.67, F.S., in
448 references thereto; reenacting s. 403.0741(6)(c),
449 F.S., relating to grease waste removal and disposal,
450 to incorporate the amendments made to ss. 218.67 and

451 339.2818, F.S., in references thereto; reenacting s.
 452 163.3177(7)(e), F.S., relating to required and
 453 optional elements of comprehensive plans and studies
 454 and surveys, to incorporate the amendment made to s.
 455 288.0656, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s.
 456 288.9962(7)(a), F.S., relating to the Broadband
 457 Opportunity Program, to incorporate the amendment made
 458 to s. 288.9961, F.S., in a reference thereto;
 459 reenacting s. 215.211(1), F.S., relating to service
 460 charges and elimination or reduction for specified
 461 proceeds, to incorporate the amendment made to s.
 462 319.32, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s.
 463 339.66(5) and (6), F.S., relating to upgrades of
 464 arterial highways with controlled access facilities,
 465 to incorporate the amendment made to s. 339.68, F.S.,
 466 in references thereto; reenacting ss. 420.9072(4) and
 467 (6), 420.9076(7)(b), and 420.9079(2), F.S., relating
 468 to the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program,
 469 adoption of affordable housing incentive strategies
 470 and committees, and the Local Government Housing Trust
 471 Fund, respectively, to incorporate the amendment made
 472 to s. 420.9073, F.S., in references thereto; providing
 473 an effective date.

474
 475 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

476
477
478
479
480
481
482
483
484
485
486
487
488
489
490
491
492
493
494
495
496
497
498
499
500

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

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

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

501 objectives from multiple programs and organizations internal and
 502 external to the department; and organize and manage external
 503 communication on such priority issues.

504 d. Promote and facilitate key department initiatives to
 505 address priority economic issues and explore data and identify
 506 opportunities for innovative approaches to address such economic
 507 issues.

508 e. Promote strategic planning for the department.

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

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

516 1. A detailed report of the performance of the Black
 517 Business Loan Program and a cumulative summary of quarterly
 518 report data required under s. 288.714.

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

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

524 ~~3.4.~~ Information provided by Space Florida under s.
 525 331.3051 and an analysis of the activities and accomplishments

526 of Space Florida.

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

529 163.3168 Planning innovations and technical assistance.—

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

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

538 201.15 Distribution of taxes collected.—All taxes
539 collected under this chapter are hereby pledged and shall be
540 first made available to make payments when due on bonds issued
541 pursuant to s. 215.618 or s. 215.619, or any other bonds
542 authorized to be issued on a parity basis with such bonds. Such
543 pledge and availability for the payment of these bonds shall
544 have priority over any requirement for the costs of collection
545 and enforcement under this section. Before distribution pursuant
546 to this section, the Department of Revenue shall deduct amounts
547 necessary to pay the costs of the collection and enforcement of
548 the tax levied by this chapter. The costs may not be levied
549 against any portion of taxes pledged to debt service on bonds to
550 the extent that the costs are required to pay any amounts

551 relating to the bonds. All of the costs of the collection and
552 enforcement of the tax levied by this chapter shall be available
553 and transferred to the extent necessary to pay debt service and
554 any other amounts payable with respect to bonds authorized
555 before January 1, 2017, secured by revenues distributed pursuant
556 to this section. All taxes remaining after deduction of costs
557 shall be distributed as follows:

558 (4) After the required distributions to the Land
559 Acquisition Trust Fund pursuant to subsections (1) and (2), the
560 lesser of 8 percent of the remainder or \$150 million in each
561 fiscal year shall be paid into the State Treasury to the credit
562 of the State Housing Trust Fund and shall be expended pursuant
563 to s. 420.50871. If 8 percent of the remainder is greater than
564 \$150 million in any fiscal year, the difference between 8
565 percent of the remainder and \$150 million shall be paid into the
566 State Treasury to the credit of the General Revenue Fund. The
567 remainder shall be distributed as follows:

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

572 **Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section**
573 **202.18, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

574 202.18 Allocation and disposition of tax proceeds.—The
575 proceeds of the communications services taxes remitted under

576 | this chapter shall be treated as follows:

577 | (2) The proceeds of the taxes remitted under s.

578 | 202.12(1)(b) shall be allocated as follows:

579 | (c)1. After the distribution required under paragraph (b),
580 | 70 percent of the remainder ~~During each calendar year, the~~
581 | ~~remaining portion of the proceeds~~ shall be transferred to the
582 | Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund.
583 | ~~Seventy percent of such proceeds shall be~~ and allocated in the
584 | same proportion as the allocation of total receipts of the half-
585 | cent sales tax under s. 218.61 and the emergency distribution
586 | under s. 218.65 in the prior state fiscal year. Thirty percent
587 | of the remainder ~~of such proceeds~~ shall be transferred to the
588 | General Revenue Fund ~~distributed pursuant to s. 218.67.~~

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

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

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

601 **Section 5. Paragraph (d) of subsection (6) of section**
602 **212.20, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

603 212.20 Funds collected, disposition; additional powers of
604 department; operational expense; refund of taxes adjudicated
605 unconstitutionally collected.—

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

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

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

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

626 distributed accordingly.

627 3. After the distribution under subparagraphs 1. and 2.,
628 0.0966 percent shall be transferred to the Local Government
629 Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund and distributed pursuant
630 to s. 218.65.

631 4. After the distributions under subparagraphs 1., 2., and
632 3., 2.0810 percent of the available proceeds shall be
633 transferred monthly to the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for
634 Counties pursuant to s. 218.215.

635 5. After the distributions under subparagraphs 1., 2., and
636 3., 1.3653 percent of the available proceeds shall be
637 transferred monthly to the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for
638 Municipalities pursuant to s. 218.215. If the total revenue to
639 be distributed pursuant to this subparagraph is at least as
640 great as the amount due from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for
641 Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance
642 Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000, no municipality shall
643 receive less than the amount due from the Revenue Sharing Trust
644 Fund for Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial
645 Assistance Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000. If the
646 total proceeds to be distributed are less than the amount
647 received in combination from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for
648 Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance
649 Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000, each municipality
650 shall receive an amount proportionate to the amount it was due

651 in state fiscal year 1999-2000.

652 6. After the distributions required under subparagraphs
653 1.-5., the greater of \$50 million or 0.1438 percent of the
654 available proceeds shall be transferred to fiscally constrained
655 counties pursuant to s. 218.67.

656 7. Of the remaining proceeds:

657 a. In each fiscal year, the sum of \$29,915,500 shall be
658 divided into as many equal parts as there are counties in the
659 state, and one part shall be distributed to each county. The
660 distribution among the several counties must begin each fiscal
661 year on or before January 5th and continue monthly for a total
662 of 4 months. If a local or special law required that any moneys
663 accruing to a county in fiscal year 1999-2000 under the then-
664 existing provisions of s. 550.135 be paid directly to the
665 district school board, special district, or a municipal
666 government, such payment must continue until the local or
667 special law is amended or repealed. The state covenants with
668 holders of bonds or other instruments of indebtedness issued by
669 local governments, special districts, or district school boards
670 before July 1, 2000, that it is not the intent of this
671 subparagraph to adversely affect the rights of those holders or
672 relieve local governments, special districts, or district school
673 boards of the duty to meet their obligations as a result of
674 previous pledges or assignments or trusts entered into which
675 obligated funds received from the distribution to county

676 governments under then-existing s. 550.135. This distribution
677 specifically is in lieu of funds distributed under s. 550.135
678 before July 1, 2000.

679 b. The department shall distribute \$166,667 monthly to
680 each applicant certified as a facility for a new or retained
681 professional sports franchise pursuant to s. 288.1162. Up to
682 \$41,667 shall be distributed monthly by the department to each
683 certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11621 for a facility
684 for a spring training franchise. However, not more than \$416,670
685 may be distributed monthly in the aggregate to all certified
686 applicants for facilities for spring training franchises.
687 Distributions begin 60 days after such certification and
688 continue for not more than 30 years, except as otherwise
689 provided in s. 288.11621. A certified applicant identified in
690 this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in distributions than
691 expended by the applicant for the public purposes provided in s.
692 288.1162(5) or s. 288.11621(3).

693 c. The department shall distribute up to \$83,333 monthly
694 to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a
695 facility used by a single spring training franchise, or up to
696 \$166,667 monthly to each certified applicant as defined in s.
697 288.11631 for a facility used by more than one spring training
698 franchise. Monthly distributions begin 60 days after such
699 certification or July 1, 2016, whichever is later, and continue
700 for not more than 20 years to each certified applicant as

701 defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by a single spring
702 training franchise or not more than 25 years to each certified
703 applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by more
704 than one spring training franchise. A certified applicant
705 identified in this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in
706 distributions than expended by the applicant for the public
707 purposes provided in s. 288.11631(3).

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

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

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

724 (III) If the ending balance of the Unemployment
725 Compensation Trust Fund exceeds \$4,071,519,600 on the last day

726 of any month, as determined from United States Department of the
 727 Treasury data, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research
 728 shall certify to the department that the ending balance of the
 729 trust fund exceeds such amount.

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

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

738 ~~8.7.~~ All other proceeds must remain in the General Revenue
 739 Fund.

740 **Section 6. Paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section**
 741 **215.971, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

742 215.971 Agreements funded with federal or state
 743 assistance.—

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

750 (h)1. If the agency agreement provides federal or state

751 financial assistance to a county or municipality that is a rural
752 community or rural area of opportunity as those terms are
753 defined in s. 288.0656(2), a provision allowing the agency to
754 provide for the payment of invoices to the county, municipality,
755 or rural area of opportunity as that term is defined in s.
756 288.0656(2), for verified and eligible performance that has been
757 completed in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth
758 in the agreement. This provision is not intended to require
759 reimbursement to the county, municipality, or rural area of
760 opportunity for invoices paid, but to allow the agency to
761 provide for the payment of invoices due. The agency shall
762 expedite such payment requests in order to facilitate the timely
763 payment of invoices received by the county, municipality, or
764 rural area of opportunity. This provision is included to
765 alleviate the financial hardships that certain rural counties
766 and municipalities encounter when administering agreements, and
767 must be exercised by the agency when a county or municipality
768 demonstrates financial hardship, to the extent that federal or
769 state law, rule, or other regulation allows such payments. This
770 paragraph may not be construed to alter or limit any other
771 provisions of federal or state law, rule, or other regulation.

772 2. By August 1, 2026, and each year thereafter, each state
773 agency shall report to the Office of Rural Prosperity
774 summarizing the implementation of this paragraph for the
775 preceding fiscal year. The Office of Rural Prosperity shall

776 summarize the information received pursuant to this paragraph in
777 its annual report as required in s. 288.013.

778 **Section 7. Section 218.67, Florida Statutes, is amended to**
779 **read:**

780 218.67 Distribution for fiscally constrained counties.—

781 (1) Each county ~~that is entirely within a rural area of~~
782 ~~opportunity as designated by the Governor pursuant to s.~~
783 ~~288.0656 or each county~~ for which the value of a mill will raise
784 no more than \$10 ~~\$5~~ million in revenue, based on the taxable
785 value certified pursuant to s. 1011.62(4)(a)1.a., from the
786 previous July 1, shall be considered a fiscally constrained
787 county.

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

795 (3) The amount to be distributed to each fiscally
796 constrained county shall be determined by the Department of
797 Revenue at the beginning of the fiscal year, using the prior
798 fiscal year's sales and use tax collections ~~July 1 taxable value~~
799 ~~certified pursuant to s. 1011.62(4)(a)1.a., tax data,~~ population
800 as defined in s. 218.21, and the most current calendar year per

801 capita personal income published by the Bureau of Economic
802 Analysis of the United States Department of Commerce millage
803 ~~rate levied for the prior fiscal year.~~ The amount distributed
804 shall be allocated based upon the following factors:

805 (a) The contribution-to-revenue ~~relative revenue-raising-~~
806 ~~capacity~~ factor for each participating county shall equal 100
807 multiplied by a quotient, the numerator of which is the county's
808 population and the denominator of which is the state sales and
809 use tax collections attributable to the county ~~be the ability of~~
810 ~~the eligible county to generate ad valorem revenues from 1 mill~~
811 ~~of taxation on a per capita basis. A county that raises no more~~
812 ~~than \$25 per capita from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 1;~~
813 ~~a county that raises more than \$25 but no more than \$30 per~~
814 ~~capita from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 0.75; and a~~
815 ~~county that raises more than \$30 but no more than \$50 per capita~~
816 ~~from 1 mill shall be assigned a value of 0.5. No value shall be~~
817 ~~assigned to counties that raise more than \$50 per capita from 1~~
818 ~~mill of ad valorem taxation.~~

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

826 ~~countywide operating millage rate for each eligible county~~
 827 ~~multiplied by 0.1.~~

828 (c) Each eligible county's proportional allocation of the
 829 total amount available to be distributed to all of the eligible
 830 counties shall be in the same proportion as the sum of the
 831 county's two factors is to the sum of the two factors for all
 832 eligible counties. The proportional rate computation must be
 833 carried to the fifth decimal place, and the amount to distribute
 834 to each county must be rounded to the next whole dollar amount.
 835 The counties that are eligible to receive an allocation under
 836 this subsection and the amount available to be distributed to
 837 such counties do ~~shall~~ not include counties participating in the
 838 phaseout period under subsection (4) or the amounts they remain
 839 eligible to receive during the phaseout.

840 (4) For those counties that no longer qualify under the
 841 requirements of subsection (1) after the effective date of this
 842 act, there shall be a 2-year phaseout period. Beginning on July
 843 1 of the year following the year in which the value of a mill
 844 for that county exceeds \$10 ~~\$5~~ million in revenue, the county
 845 shall receive two-thirds of the amount received in the prior
 846 year, and beginning on July 1 of the second year following the
 847 year in which the value of a mill for that county exceeds \$10 ~~\$5~~
 848 million in revenue, the county shall receive one-third of the
 849 amount received in the last year that the county qualified as a
 850 fiscally constrained county. Following the 2-year phaseout

HB 1427

2025

851 period, the county ~~is shall~~ no longer be eligible to receive any
852 distributions under this section unless the county can be
853 considered a fiscally constrained county as provided in
854 subsection (1).

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

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

864 2. Thirty percent may be used for infrastructure needs.

865 3. Twenty percent may be expended for any public purpose.

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

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

872 288.0001 Economic Development Programs Evaluation.—The
873 Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of
874 Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA)
875 shall develop and present to the Governor, the President of the

876 Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the
877 chairs of the legislative appropriations committees the Economic
878 Development Programs Evaluation.

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

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

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

892 b. Consideration of updates to the definitions and
893 references to classify additional rural areas, such as growing
894 communities, unincorporated areas, or rural communities by
895 design; and

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

899 2. A survey of local governments meeting the statutory
900 definition of "rural community" or "rural area of opportunity"

901 to assess the benefits to the local government of being
902 identified as such and any perceived unmet needs in the
903 implementation of current statutory provisions designed to
904 support rural communities or areas.

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

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

915 (c) The Office of Economic and Demographic Research and
916 OPPAGA shall submit a report to the President of the Senate and
917 the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 31,
918 2025. The report must provide recommendations to address any
919 findings, including any changes in statutory definitions or
920 references to rural communities or areas, opportunities to
921 enhance state support to rural communities or areas, outcome
922 measures or other criteria that may be used to examine the
923 effectiveness of state grant programs for rural communities or
924 areas, and adjustments to program design, including changes to
925 increase participation in state grant programs for rural

926 communities or areas.

927 (d) This subsection expires July 1, 2026.

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

932 288.001 The Florida Small Business Development Center
 933 Network.—

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

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

951 strengthen community collaboration, raise awareness of available
952 resources to provide opportunities for new business development
953 or existing business growth, and make professional experience,
954 education, and business information available in these essential
955 communities. The network may dedicate funds to facilitate local
956 or regional events that focus on small business topics, provide
957 consulting services, and leverage partner organizations, such as
958 the regional economic development organizations, local workforce
959 development boards as described in s. 445.07, and Florida
960 College System institutions.

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

963 288.007 Inventory of communities seeking to recruit
964 businesses.—By September 30 of each year, a county or
965 municipality that has a population of at least 25,000 or its
966 local economic development organization, and each local
967 government within a rural area of opportunity as defined in s.
968 288.0656 or its local economic development organization, shall
969 ~~must~~ submit to the department a brief overview of the strengths,
970 services, and economic development incentives that its community
971 offers. The local government or its local economic development
972 organization also shall ~~must~~ identify any industries that it is
973 encouraging to locate or relocate to its area. Unless otherwise
974 required pursuant to this section, a county or municipality
975 having a population of 25,000 or less ~~fewer~~ or its local

976 economic development organization seeking to recruit businesses
977 may submit information as required in this section and may
978 participate in any activity or initiative resulting from the
979 collection, analysis, and reporting of the information to the
980 department pursuant to this section.

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

983 288.013 Office of Rural Prosperity.-

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

999 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity is created within the
1000 Department of Commerce for the purpose of supporting rural

1001 communities by helping rural stakeholders navigate available
1002 programs and resources and representing rural interests across
1003 state government.

1004 (3) The Governor shall appoint a director to lead the
1005 office, subject to confirmation by the Senate. The director
1006 shall report to the secretary of the department and shall serve
1007 at the pleasure of the secretary.

1008 (4) The office shall do all of the following:

1009 (a) Serve as the state's point of contact for rural local
1010 governments.

1011 (b) Administer the Rural Economic Development Initiative
1012 ("REDI") pursuant to s. 288.0656.

1013 (c) Provide training and technical assistance to rural
1014 local governments on a broad range of community and economic
1015 development activities. The training and technical assistance
1016 may be offered using communications technology or in person and
1017 must be recorded and posted to the office's website. The
1018 training and technical assistance must include, at a minimum,
1019 the following topics:

1020 1. How to access state and federal resources, including
1021 training on the online rural resource directory required under
1022 paragraph (d).

1023 2. Best practices relating to comprehensive planning,
1024 economic development, and land development in rural communities.

1025 3. Strategies to address management and administrative

1026 capacity challenges unique to rural local governments.

1027 4. Requirements of, and updates on recent changes to, the
1028 Community Planning Act under s. 163.3161.

1029 5. Updates on other recent state and federal laws
1030 affecting rural local governments.

1031 (d) Create and maintain an online rural resource directory
1032 to serve as an interactive tool to navigate the various state
1033 and federal resources, tools, and services available to rural
1034 local governments. The office shall regularly maintain the
1035 resource directory and, to the greatest extent possible, include
1036 up-to-date information on state and federal programs, resources,
1037 tools, and services that address the needs of rural communities
1038 in all areas of governance. Each state agency shall routinely
1039 provide information and updates to the office for maintenance of
1040 the resource directory. The resource directory must allow users
1041 to search by indicators, such as agency name, resource type, or
1042 topic, and include a notification function to allow users to
1043 receive alerts when new or modified resources are available. To
1044 the greatest extent possible, the resource directory must
1045 include information on financial match requirements for the
1046 state and federal programs listed in the directory.

1047 (5) (a) By October 1, 2025, the office shall establish and
1048 staff seven regional rural community liaison centers across this
1049 state for the purpose of providing specialized in-person state
1050 support to local governments in rural areas of opportunity as

1051 defined in s. 288.0656. The department shall by rule divide this
1052 state into seven regions and assign a regional rural community
1053 liaison center to each region. Each liaison center shall support
1054 the local governments within its geographic territory and shall
1055 be staffed with at least two full-time department personnel. At
1056 a minimum, liaison centers shall have the following powers,
1057 duties, and functions:

1058 1. Work with local governments to plan and achieve goals
1059 for local or regional growth, economic development, and rural
1060 prosperity.

1061 2. Facilitate local government access to state and federal
1062 resources, such as grants, loans, and other aid or resources.

1063 3. Advise local governments on available waivers of
1064 program requirements, including financial match waivers or
1065 reductions, for projects using state or federal funds through
1066 the Rural Economic Development Initiative under s. 288.0656.

1067 4. Coordinate local government technical assistance needs
1068 with the department and other state or federal agencies.

1069 5. Promote model ordinances, policies, and strategies
1070 related to economic development.

1071 6. Assist local governments with regulatory and reporting
1072 compliance.

1073 (b) To the greatest extent possible, the regional rural
1074 community liaison centers shall coordinate with local and
1075 regional governmental entities, regional economic development

1076 organizations as defined in s. 288.018, and other appropriate
1077 entities to establish a network to foster community-driven
1078 solutions that promote viable and sustainable rural communities.

1079 (c) The regional rural community liaison centers shall
1080 regularly engage with the Rural Economic Development Initiative
1081 established in s. 288.0656, and at least one staff member from
1082 each liaison center shall attend, either in person or by means
1083 of electronic communication, the monthly meetings required by s.
1084 288.0656(6)(c).

1085 (6) By December 1, 2025, and each year thereafter, the
1086 director of the office shall submit to the Administration
1087 Commission in the Executive Office of the Governor a written
1088 report describing the office's operations and accomplishments
1089 for the preceding year, inclusive of the Rural Economic
1090 Development Initiative report required by s. 288.0656(8). In
1091 consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
1092 Services, the office shall also include in the annual report
1093 recommendations for policies, programs, and funding to further
1094 support the needs of rural communities in this state. The office
1095 shall submit the annual report to the President of the Senate
1096 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of
1097 each year and publish the annual report on the office's website.
1098 The director shall present, in person at the next scheduled
1099 Administration Commission meeting, detailed information from the
1100 annual report required by this subsection.

1101 (7) (a) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and
1102 Government Accountability (OPPAGA) shall review the
1103 effectiveness of the office by December 15, 2026, and each year
1104 thereafter until 2028. Beginning in 2029, OPPAGA shall review
1105 and evaluate the office every 3 years and shall submit a report
1106 based on its findings. Each report must recommend policy and
1107 statutory modifications for consideration by the Legislature.
1108 OPPAGA shall submit each report to the President of the Senate
1109 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to the
1110 schedule.

1111 (b) OPPAGA shall review strategies implemented by other
1112 states on rural community preservation, enhancement, and
1113 revitalization and report on their effectiveness and potential
1114 for implementation in this state. OPPAGA shall include its
1115 findings in its report to the President of the Senate and the
1116 Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2027,
1117 and every 3 years thereafter.

1118 (c)1. OPPAGA shall review each state-funded or state-
1119 administered grant and loan program available to local
1120 governments to:

1121 a. Identify any specified local government financial match
1122 requirements and whether any portion of a match may be waived or
1123 is required to be waived, pursuant to law, and programs where a
1124 financial match waiver may be appropriate for rural local
1125 government applicants, if not contemplated by law.

1126 b. Identify grant and loan application evaluation
1127 criteria, including scoring procedures, for programs that may be
1128 perceived to be overly burdensome for rural local government
1129 applicants, and whether special accommodations or preferences
1130 for rural local governments may be appropriate.

1131 2. OPPAGA shall produce a report based on its review and
1132 submit the report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
1133 of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2026. This
1134 paragraph expires June 30, 2027.

1135 **Section 12. Section 288.014, Florida Statutes, is created**
1136 **to read:**

1137 288.014 Renaissance Grants Program.—

1138 (1) The Legislature finds that it has traditionally
1139 provided programs to assist rural communities with economic
1140 development and enhance their ability to attract businesses and
1141 that, by providing that extra component of economic viability,
1142 rural communities are able to attract new businesses and grow
1143 existing ones. However, the Legislature finds that a subset of
1144 rural communities has decreased in population over the past
1145 decade, contributing to a decline in local business activity and
1146 economic development. The Legislature further finds that the
1147 state must transform its assistance to these specific rural
1148 communities to help them achieve a necessary precursor of
1149 economic viability. The Legislature further finds that the
1150 approach intended by the creation of renaissance grants is to

1151 focus on reversing the economic deterioration in rural
1152 communities by retaining and attracting residents by giving them
1153 a reason to stay, which is the impetus of natural economic
1154 growth, business opportunities, and increased quality of life.

1155 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity within the department
1156 shall administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block
1157 grants to eligible counties. By October 1, 2025, the Office of
1158 Economic and Demographic Research shall certify to the Office of
1159 Rural Prosperity which counties are growth-impeded. For the
1160 purposes of this section, "growth-impeded" means a county that,
1161 as of the most recent population estimate, has had a declining
1162 population over the last 10 years. After an initial
1163 certification, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research
1164 shall annually certify whether the county remains growth-
1165 impeded, until the county has 3 consecutive years of population
1166 growth. Upon such certification of population growth, the county
1167 is eligible to participate in the program for 1 additional year
1168 in order for the county to prepare for the end of block grant
1169 funding.

1170 (3) (a) Each participating county shall enter into an
1171 agreement with the Office of Rural Prosperity to receive the
1172 block grant. Each county has broad authority to design its
1173 specific plan to achieve population growth within the broad
1174 parameters identified in this section. The Office of Rural
1175 Prosperity may not determine the manner in which the county

1176 implements the block grant. However, regional rural community
1177 liaison center staff shall provide assistance in developing the
1178 county's plan, upon request.

1179 (b) Each participating county shall report annually to the
1180 Office of Rural Prosperity on activities undertaken,
1181 intergovernmental agreements entered into, and other information
1182 as required by the office.

1183 (c) Each participating county shall receive \$1 million
1184 from the funds appropriated to the program. Counties
1185 participating in the program shall make all attempts to limit
1186 expenses for administrative costs, consistent with the need for
1187 prudent management and accountability in the use of public
1188 funds. Each county may contribute other funds for block grant
1189 purposes, including local, state, or federal grant funds, or
1190 seek out in-kind or financial contributions from private or
1191 public sources to assist in fulfilling the activities
1192 undertaken.

1193 (4) (a) A participating county shall hire and retain a
1194 renaissance coordinator and may use block grant funds for this
1195 purpose. The renaissance coordinator is responsible for:

1196 1. Ensuring that block grant funds are used as provided in
1197 this section;

1198 2. Coordinating with other local governments, school
1199 boards, Florida College System institutions, or other entities;
1200 and

1201 3. Reporting as necessary to the state, including
1202 information necessary pursuant to subsection (7).

1203 (b) The Office of Rural Prosperity regional rural
1204 community liaison center staff shall provide assistance, upon
1205 request, and training to the renaissance coordinator to ensure
1206 successful implementation of the block grant.

1207 (5) A participating county shall design a plan to make
1208 targeted investments in the community to achieve population
1209 growth and increase the economic vitality of the community. The
1210 plan must include the following key features for use of the
1211 state support:

1212 (a) Technology centers with extended hours located within
1213 schools or on school premises, administered by the local school
1214 board, for such schools which provide extended hours and support
1215 for access by students.

1216 (b) Facilities that colocate adult day care with child
1217 care facilities. The site-sharing facilities must be managed to
1218 also provide opportunities for direct interaction between
1219 generations and increase the health and well-being of both
1220 younger and older participants, reduce social isolation, and
1221 create cost and time efficiencies for working family members.
1222 The regional rural community liaison center staff of the Office
1223 of Rural Prosperity shall assist the county, upon request, with
1224 bringing to the Rural Economic Development Initiative or
1225 directly to the appropriate state agency recommendations

1226 necessary to streamline any required state permits, licenses,
1227 regulations, or other requirements.

1228 (c) Technology labs managed in agreement with the nearest
1229 Florida College System institution or a career center as
1230 established under s. 1001.44. Repurposing vacant industrial
1231 sites or existing office space must be given priority in the
1232 selection of lab locations. Each local technology lab must be
1233 staffed and open for extended hours with the capacity to
1234 provide:

1235 1. Access to trainers and equipment necessary for users to
1236 earn various certificates or online degrees in technology;

1237 2. Hands-on assistance with applying for appropriate
1238 remote work opportunities; and

1239 3. Studio space with equipment for graduates and other
1240 qualifying residents to perform remote work that is based on the
1241 use of technology. Collaboration with community partners,
1242 including the local workforce development board as described in
1243 s. 445.007, to provide training opportunities, in-kind support
1244 such as transportation to and from the lab, financing of
1245 equipment for in-home use, or basic maintenance of such
1246 equipment is required.

1247 (6) In addition to the hiring of a renaissance
1248 coordinator, a participating county shall develop
1249 intergovernmental agreements for shared responsibilities with
1250 its municipalities, school board, and Florida College System

1251 institution or career center and enter into necessary contracts
1252 with providers and community partners in order to implement the
1253 plan.

1254 (7) (a) Every 2 years, the Auditor General shall conduct an
1255 operational audit as defined in s. 11.45 of each county's grant
1256 activities, beginning in 2026.

1257 (b) On December 31, 2026, and every year thereafter, the
1258 Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall submit an
1259 annual report of renaissance block grant recipients by county to
1260 the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
1261 Representatives. The report must provide key economic indicators
1262 that measure progress in altering longer-term trends in the
1263 county. The Office of Rural Prosperity shall provide the Office
1264 of Economic and Demographic Research with information as
1265 requested to complete the report.

1266 (8) Notwithstanding s. 216.301, funds appropriated for the
1267 purposes of this section are not subject to reversion.

1268 (9) This section expires June 30, 2040.

1269 **Section 13. Section 288.0175, Florida Statutes, is created**
1270 **to read:**

1271 288.0175 Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant
1272 Program.—

1273 (1) The Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant
1274 Program is established within the Office of Rural Prosperity
1275 within the department to fund and support the development of

1276 public infrastructure smart technology projects in communities
1277 located in rural areas of opportunity, subject to legislative
1278 appropriation.

1279 (2) As used in this section, the term:

1280 (a) "Public infrastructure smart technology" means systems
1281 and applications that use connectivity, data analytics, and
1282 automation to improve public infrastructure by increasing
1283 efficiency, enhancing public services, and promoting sustainable
1284 development.

1285 (b) "Rural area of opportunity" has the same meaning as in
1286 s. 288.0656.

1287 (c) "Smart technology lead organization" means a not-for-
1288 profit corporation organized under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal
1289 Revenue Code which has been in existence for at least 3 years
1290 and specializes in smart region planning.

1291 (3) (a) The Office of Rural Prosperity shall contract with
1292 one or more smart technology lead organizations to administer
1293 the grant program for the purpose of deploying public
1294 infrastructure smart technology in rural communities. In
1295 accordance with the terms required by the office, the smart
1296 technology lead organization shall provide grants to counties
1297 and municipalities located within a rural area of opportunity
1298 for public infrastructure smart technology projects.

1299 (b) The office's contract with a smart technology lead
1300 organization must specify the contract deliverables, including

1301 financial reports and other reports due the office, timeframes
1302 for achieving contractual obligations, and any other
1303 requirements the office determines are necessary. The contract
1304 must require the smart technology lead organization to do the
1305 following:

1306 1. Collaborate with counties and municipalities located in
1307 rural areas of opportunity to identify opportunities for local
1308 governments to institute cost-effective smart technology
1309 solutions for improving public services and infrastructure.

1310 2. Provide technical assistance to counties and
1311 municipalities located in rural areas of opportunity in
1312 developing plans for public infrastructure smart technology
1313 projects.

1314 3. Assist counties and municipalities located in rural
1315 areas of opportunity in connecting with other communities,
1316 companies, and other entities to leverage the impact of each
1317 public infrastructure smart technology project.

1318 (4) The office shall include in its annual report required
1319 by s. 288.013(6) a description of the projects funded under this
1320 section.

1321 **Section 14. Subsections (1), (2), and (4) of section**
1322 **288.018, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

1323 288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

1324 (1) (a) For the purposes of this section, the term
1325 "regional economic development organization" means an economic

HB 1427

2025

1326 development organization located in or contracted to serve a
1327 rural area of opportunity, as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s.~~
1328 ~~288.0656(2)(d)~~.

1329 (b) Subject to appropriation, the Office of Rural
1330 Prosperity ~~department~~ shall establish a grant program to provide
1331 funding to regional economic development organizations for the
1332 purpose of building the professional capacity of those
1333 organizations. Building the professional capacity of a regional
1334 economic development organization includes hiring professional
1335 staff to develop, deliver, and provide needed economic
1336 development professional services, including technical
1337 assistance, education and leadership development, marketing, and
1338 project recruitment. Grants may also be used by a regional
1339 economic development organization to provide technical
1340 assistance to local governments, local economic development
1341 organizations, and existing and prospective businesses.

1342 (c) A regional economic development organization may apply
1343 annually to the office ~~department~~ for a grant. The office
1344 ~~department~~ is authorized to approve, on an annual basis, grants
1345 to such regional economic development organizations. The office
1346 may award a maximum amount of \$50,000 in a year to ~~maximum~~
1347 ~~amount~~ an organization ~~may receive in any year will be \$50,000,~~
1348 or \$250,000 each to ~~for~~ any three regional economic development
1349 organizations that serve an entire region of a rural area of
1350 opportunity designated pursuant to s. 288.0656(7) if they are

1351 recognized by the office ~~department~~ as serving such a region.

1352 (2) In approving the participants, the office ~~department~~
 1353 shall require the following:

1354 (a) Documentation of official commitments of support from
 1355 each of the units of local government represented by the
 1356 regional organization.

1357 (b) Demonstration that the organization is in existence
 1358 and actively involved in economic development activities serving
 1359 the region.

1360 (c) Demonstration of the manner in which the organization
 1361 is or will coordinate its efforts with those of other local and
 1362 state organizations.

1363 (4) Except as otherwise provided in the General
 1364 Appropriations Act, the department may expend up to \$750,000
 1365 each fiscal year from funds appropriated ~~to the Rural Community~~
 1366 ~~Development Revolving Loan Fund~~ for the purposes outlined in
 1367 this section.

1368 **Section 15. Section 288.019, Florida Statutes, is amended**
 1369 **to read:**

1370 288.019 Rural considerations in grant review and
 1371 evaluation processes; financial match waiver or reduction.-

1372 (1) Notwithstanding any other law, and to the fullest
 1373 extent possible, each agency and organization ~~the member~~
 1374 ~~agencies and organizations~~ of the Rural Economic Development
 1375 Initiative (REDI) as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(6)(a)~~

1376 shall review:

1377 (a) All grant and loan application evaluation criteria and
1378 scoring procedures to ensure the fullest access for rural
1379 communities ~~counties~~ as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(2)~~ to
1380 resources available throughout the state; and

1381 (b) The financial match requirements for projects in rural
1382 communities.

1383 (2)(1) Each REDI agency and organization shall consider
1384 the impact on and ability of rural communities to meet and be
1385 competitive under such criteria, scoring, and requirements. Upon
1386 review, each REDI agency and organization shall ~~review all~~
1387 ~~evaluation and scoring procedures~~ and develop a proposal for
1388 modifications to those procedures which minimize the financial
1389 and resource impact to a rural community, including waiver or
1390 reduction of any required financial match requirements ~~impact of~~
1391 ~~a project within a rural area.~~

1392 (a)(2) Evaluation criteria and scoring procedures must
1393 provide for an appropriate ranking, when ranking is a component
1394 of the program, based on the proportionate impact that projects
1395 have on a rural area when compared with similar project impacts
1396 on an urban area. Additionally,

1397 ~~(3)~~ evaluation criteria and scoring procedures must
1398 recognize the disparity of available fiscal resources for an
1399 equal level of financial support from an urban county or
1400 municipality and a rural county or municipality.

1401 ~~(a)~~ The evaluation criteria should weight contribution in
1402 proportion to the amount of funding available at the local
1403 level.

1404 (b) Match requirements must be waived or reduced for rural
1405 communities. When appropriate, an in-kind match must ~~should~~ be
1406 allowed and applied as a financial match when a rural community
1407 county is experiencing economic financial distress as defined in
1408 s. 288.0656 ~~through elevated unemployment at a rate in excess of~~
1409 ~~the state's average by 5 percentage points or because of the~~
1410 ~~loss of its ad valorem base. Donations of land, though usually~~
1411 not recognized as an in-kind match, may be treated as such. As
1412 appropriate, each agency and organization that applies for or
1413 receives federal funding must request federal approval to waive
1414 or reduce the financial match requirements, if any, for projects
1415 in rural communities.

1416 ~~(3)(4) For existing programs,~~ The proposal ~~modified~~
1417 ~~evaluation criteria and scoring procedure~~ must be submitted
1418 ~~delivered~~ to the Office of Rural Prosperity ~~department~~ for
1419 distribution to the REDI agencies and organizations. The REDI
1420 agencies and organizations shall review and make comments and
1421 recommendations that. ~~Future rules, programs, evaluation~~
1422 ~~criteria, and scoring processes must be brought before a REDI~~
1423 ~~meeting for review, discussion, and recommendation to allow~~
1424 rural communities ~~counties~~ fuller access to the state's
1425 resources.

1426 (4) Each REDI agency and organization shall ensure that
 1427 related administrative rules or policies are modified, as
 1428 necessary, to reflect the finalized proposal and that
 1429 information about the authorized wavier or reduction is included
 1430 in the online rural resource directory of the Office of Rural
 1431 Prosperity required in s. 288.013(4) (d).

1432 (5) The rural liaison from the related regional district
 1433 shall assist the rural community to make requests of waiver or
 1434 reduction of match.

1435 **Section 16. Subsection (3) is added to section 288.021,**
 1436 **Florida Statutes, to read:**

1437 288.021 Economic development liaison.—

1438 (3) When practicable, the staff member appointed as the
 1439 economic development liaison shall also serve as the agency
 1440 representative for the Rural Economic Development Initiative
 1441 pursuant to s. 288.0656.

1442 **Section 17. Section 288.065, Florida Statutes, is amended**
 1443 **to read:**

1444 288.065 Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund.—

1445 (1) The Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund
 1446 Program is established within the Office of Rural Prosperity
 1447 ~~department~~ to facilitate the use of existing federal, state, and
 1448 local financial resources by providing local governments with
 1449 financial assistance to further promote the economic viability
 1450 of rural communities. These funds may be used to finance

HB 1427

2025

1451 initiatives directed toward maintaining or developing the
1452 economic base of rural communities, especially initiatives
1453 addressing employment opportunities for residents of these
1454 communities.

1455 (2) (a) The program shall provide for long-term loans, loan
1456 guarantees, and loan loss reserves to units of local
1457 governments, or economic development organizations substantially
1458 underwritten by a unit of local government.7

1459 (b) For purposes of this section, the term "unit of local
1460 government" means:

1461 1. A county within counties with a population populations
1462 of 75,000 or less. fewer, or within any

1463 2. A county with a population of 125,000 or less fewer
1464 which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or
1465 less. fewer

1466 3. A municipality within a county described in
1467 subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.

1468 4. A county or municipality within a rural area of
1469 opportunity.

1470
1471 For purposes of this paragraph, population is determined in
1472 accordance with the most recent official estimates pursuant to
1473 s. 186.901 and must include those residing in incorporated and
1474 unincorporated areas of a county, based on the most recent
1475 official population estimate as determined under s. 186.901,

1476 ~~including those residing in incorporated areas and those~~
1477 ~~residing in unincorporated areas of the county, or to units of~~
1478 ~~local government, or economic development organizations~~
1479 ~~substantially underwritten by a unit of local government, within~~
1480 ~~a rural area of opportunity.~~

1481 ~~(c)(b)~~ Requests for loans must ~~shall~~ be made by
1482 application to the office ~~department~~. Loans must ~~shall~~ be made
1483 pursuant to agreements specifying the terms and conditions
1484 agreed to between the applicant and the office ~~department~~. The
1485 loans are ~~shall be~~ the legal obligations of the applicant.

1486 ~~(d)(e)~~ All repayments of principal and interest shall be
1487 returned to the loan fund and made available for loans to other
1488 applicants. However, in a rural area of opportunity designated
1489 under s. 288.0656 ~~by the Governor~~, and upon approval by the
1490 office ~~department~~, repayments of principal and interest may be
1491 retained by the applicant if such repayments are dedicated and
1492 matched to fund regionally based economic development
1493 organizations representing the rural area of opportunity.

1494 (3) The office ~~department~~ shall manage the fund,
1495 establishing loan practices that must include, but are not
1496 limited to, procedures for establishing loan interest rates,
1497 uses of funding, application procedures, and application review
1498 procedures. The office ~~has department shall have~~ final approval
1499 authority for any loan under this section.

1500 (4) Notwithstanding ~~the provisions of~~ s. 216.301, funds

1501 appropriated for this loan fund may ~~purpose shall~~ not be subject
 1502 to reversion.

1503 (5) The office shall include in its annual report required
 1504 under s. 288.013 detailed information about the fund, including
 1505 loans made during the previous fiscal year, loans active, loans
 1506 terminated or repaid, and the amount of funds not obligated as
 1507 of 14 days before the date the report is due.

1508 **Section 18. Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of section**
 1509 **288.0655, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (6) is**
 1510 **added to that section, to read:**

1511 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

1512 (1) There is created within the Office of Rural Prosperity
 1513 ~~department~~ the Rural Infrastructure Fund to facilitate the
 1514 planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in
 1515 rural communities which will encourage job creation, capital
 1516 investment, and the strengthening and diversification of rural
 1517 economies by promoting tourism, trade, and economic development.

1518 (2) (a) Funds appropriated by the Legislature shall be
 1519 distributed by the office ~~department~~ through grant programs that
 1520 maximize the use of federal, local, and private resources,
 1521 including, but not limited to, those available under the Small
 1522 Cities Community Development Block Grant Program.

1523 (b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural
 1524 areas of opportunity as defined by the Rural Economic
 1525 Development Initiative to infrastructure funding programs of the

1526 Federal Government, such as those offered by the United States
1527 Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of
1528 Commerce, and state programs, including those offered by Rural
1529 Economic Development Initiative agencies, and to facilitate
1530 local government or private infrastructure funding efforts, the
1531 office department ~~department~~ may award grants for up to 75 percent of the
1532 total infrastructure project cost, or up to 100 percent of the
1533 total infrastructure project cost for a project located in a
1534 rural community as defined in s. 288.0656(2) which is also
1535 located in a fiscally constrained county as defined in s.
1536 218.67(1) or a rural area of opportunity as defined in s.
1537 288.0656(2). Eligible uses of funds may include improving any
1538 inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action
1539 that prohibits economic or community growth and reducing the
1540 costs to community users of proposed infrastructure improvements
1541 that exceed such costs in comparable communities. Eligible uses
1542 of funds include improvements to public infrastructure for
1543 industrial or commercial sites and upgrades to or development of
1544 public tourism infrastructure. Authorized infrastructure may
1545 include the following public or public-private partnership
1546 facilities: storm water systems; telecommunications facilities;
1547 roads or other remedies to transportation impediments; nature-
1548 based tourism facilities; or other physical requirements
1549 necessary to facilitate tourism, trade, and economic development
1550 activities in the community. Authorized infrastructure may also

1551 include publicly or privately owned self-powered nature-based
 1552 tourism facilities, publicly owned telecommunications
 1553 facilities, and additions to the distribution facilities of the
 1554 existing natural gas utility as defined in s. 366.04(3)(c), the
 1555 existing electric utility as defined in s. 366.02, or the
 1556 existing water or wastewater utility as defined in s.
 1557 367.021(12), or any other existing water or wastewater facility,
 1558 which owns a gas or electric distribution system or a water or
 1559 wastewater system in this state when:

1560 1. A contribution-in-aid of construction is required to
 1561 serve public or public-private partnership facilities under the
 1562 tariffs of any natural gas, electric, water, or wastewater
 1563 utility as defined herein; and

1564 2. Such utilities as defined herein are willing and able
 1565 to provide such service.

1566 (c) The office ~~department~~ may award grants of up to
 1567 \$300,000 for infrastructure feasibility studies, design and
 1568 engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and
 1569 preparation or site readiness activities. Site readiness
 1570 expenses may include clearing title, surveys, permitting,
 1571 environmental studies, and regulatory compliance costs. Grants
 1572 awarded under this paragraph may be used in conjunction with
 1573 grants awarded under paragraph (b). In evaluating applications
 1574 under this paragraph, the office ~~department~~ shall consider the
 1575 extent to which the application seeks to minimize administrative

1576 and consultant expenses.

1577 (d) The office ~~department~~ shall participate in a
1578 memorandum of agreement with the United States Department of
1579 Agriculture under which state funds available through the Rural
1580 Infrastructure Fund may be advanced, in excess of the prescribed
1581 state share, for a project that has received from the United
1582 States Department of Agriculture a preliminary determination of
1583 eligibility for federal financial support. State funds in excess
1584 of the prescribed state share which are advanced pursuant to
1585 this paragraph and the memorandum of agreement shall be
1586 reimbursed when funds are awarded under an application for
1587 federal funding.

1588 (e) To enable local governments to access the resources
1589 available pursuant to s. 403.973(17), the office ~~department~~ may
1590 award grants for surveys, feasibility studies, and other
1591 activities related to the identification and preclearance review
1592 of land which is suitable for preclearance review. Authorized
1593 grants under this paragraph may not exceed \$75,000 each, except
1594 in the case of a project in a rural area of opportunity, in
1595 which case the grant may not exceed \$300,000. Any funds awarded
1596 under this paragraph must be matched at a level of 50 percent
1597 with local funds, except that any funds awarded for a project in
1598 a rural area of opportunity do not require a match of local
1599 funds. ~~If an application for funding is for a catalyst site, as~~
1600 ~~defined in s. 288.0656, the requirement for local match may be~~

1601 ~~waived pursuant to the process in s. 288.06561.~~ In evaluating
1602 applications under this paragraph, the office ~~department~~ shall
1603 consider the extent to which the application seeks to minimize
1604 administrative and consultant expenses.

1605 (3) The office ~~department~~, in consultation with the
1606 Department of Transportation ~~Florida Tourism Industry Marketing~~
1607 ~~Corporation~~, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the
1608 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, as
1609 appropriate, shall review and certify applications pursuant to
1610 s. 288.061. The review must include an evaluation of the
1611 economic benefit and long-term viability. The office has
1612 ~~department~~ shall have final approval for any grant under this
1613 section.

1614 (6) The office shall include in its annual report required
1615 under s. 288.013 detailed information about the fund, including
1616 grants made for the year, grants active, grants terminated or
1617 complete, and the amount of funds not obligated as of 14 days
1618 before the date the report is due.

1619 **Section 19. Subsection (1), paragraphs (a), (b), and (e)**
1620 **of subsection (2), subsections (3) and (6), paragraph (c) of**
1621 **subsection (7), and subsection (8) of section 288.0656, Florida**
1622 **Statutes, are amended to read:**

1623 288.0656 Rural Economic Development Initiative.—

1624 (1)(a) Recognizing that rural communities and regions
1625 continue to face extraordinary challenges in their efforts to

1626 significantly improve their economies, specifically in terms of
1627 personal income, job creation, average wages, and strong tax
1628 bases, it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage and
1629 facilitate the location and expansion of major economic
1630 development projects of significant scale in such rural
1631 communities. The Legislature finds that rural communities are
1632 the essential conduits for the economy's distribution,
1633 manufacturing, and food supply.

1634 (b) The Rural Economic Development Initiative, known as
1635 "REDI," is created within the Office of Rural Prosperity
1636 ~~department,~~ and all the participation of state and regional
1637 agencies listed in paragraph (6) (a) shall participate in this
1638 initiative ~~is authorized.~~

1639 (2) As used in this section, the term:

1640 ~~(a) "Catalyst project" means a business locating or~~
1641 ~~expanding in a rural area of opportunity to serve as an economic~~
1642 ~~generator of regional significance for the growth of a regional~~
1643 ~~target industry cluster. The project must provide capital~~
1644 ~~investment on a scale significant enough to affect the entire~~
1645 ~~region and result in the development of high wage and high skill~~
1646 ~~jobs.~~

1647 ~~(b) "Catalyst site" means a parcel or parcels of land~~
1648 ~~within a rural area of opportunity that has been prioritized as~~
1649 ~~a geographic site for economic development through partnerships~~
1650 ~~with state, regional, and local organizations. The site must be~~

1651 ~~reviewed by REDI and approved by the department for the purposes~~
1652 ~~of locating a catalyst project.~~

1653 (c)~~(e)~~ "Rural community" means:

1654 1. A county with a population of 75,000 or less ~~fewer~~.

1655 2. A county with a population of 125,000 or less ~~fewer~~

1656 which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or
1657 less ~~fewer~~.

1658 3. A municipality within a county described in
1659 subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.

1660 4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an
1661 incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or less
1662 ~~fewer~~ and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural
1663 or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as
1664 rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress
1665 factors identified in paragraph (a) ~~paragraph (e)~~ and verified
1666 by the department.

1667

1668 For purposes of this paragraph, population shall be determined
1669 in accordance with the most recent official estimate pursuant to
1670 s. 186.901.

1671 (3) REDI shall be responsible for coordinating and
1672 focusing the efforts and resources of state and regional
1673 agencies on the problems which affect the fiscal, economic, and
1674 community viability of Florida's ~~economically distressed~~ rural
1675 communities, working with local governments, community-based

1676 organizations, and private organizations that have an interest
 1677 in the growth and development of these communities to find ways
 1678 to balance environmental and growth management issues with local
 1679 needs.

1680 (6) (a) By August 1 of each year, the head of each of the
 1681 following agencies and organizations shall designate a deputy
 1682 secretary or higher-level staff person from within the agency or
 1683 organization to serve as the REDI representative for the agency
 1684 or organization:

- 1685 1. The Department of Transportation.
- 1686 2. The Department of Environmental Protection.
- 1687 3. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- 1688 4. The Department of State.
- 1689 5. The Department of Health.
- 1690 6. The Department of Children and Families.
- 1691 7. The Department of Corrections.
- 1692 8. The Department of Education.
- 1693 9. The Department of Juvenile Justice.
- 1694 10. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- 1695 11. Each water management district.
- 1696 12. CareerSource Florida, Inc.
- 1697 13. VISIT Florida.
- 1698 14. The Florida Regional Planning Council Association.
- 1699 15. The Agency for Health Care Administration.
- 1700 16. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

1701 (IFAS).

1702 (b) An alternate for each designee must ~~shall~~ also be
1703 chosen, who must also be a deputy secretary or higher-level
1704 staff person, and the names of the designees and alternates must
1705 shall be reported ~~sent~~ to the director of the Office of Rural
1706 Prosperity. At least one rural liaison from each regional rural
1707 community liaison center must participate in the REDI meetings
1708 Secretary of Commerce.

1709 (c) REDI shall meet at least each month, but may meet more
1710 often as necessary. Each REDI representative, or his or her
1711 designee, shall be physically present or available by means of
1712 electronic communication for each meeting.

1713 (d) ~~(b)~~ Each REDI representative must have comprehensive
1714 knowledge of his or her agency's functions, both regulatory and
1715 service in nature, and of the state's economic goals, policies,
1716 and programs. This person shall be the primary point of contact
1717 for his or her agency with REDI on issues and projects relating
1718 to ~~economically distressed~~ rural communities and with regard to
1719 expediting project review, shall ensure a prompt effective
1720 response to problems arising with regard to rural issues, and
1721 shall work closely with the other REDI representatives in the
1722 identification of opportunities for preferential awards of
1723 program funds, contractual or other agreement provisions which
1724 meet the requirements of s. 215.971, and allowances and waiver
1725 of program requirements when necessary to encourage and

1726 facilitate ~~long-term private~~ capital investment and job
1727 creation.

1728 (e)~~(e)~~ The REDI representatives shall work with REDI in
1729 the review and evaluation of statutes and rules for adverse
1730 impact on rural communities and the development of alternative
1731 proposals to mitigate that impact.

1732 (f)~~(d)~~ Each REDI representative shall be responsible for
1733 ensuring that each district office or facility of his or her
1734 agency is informed quarterly about the Rural Economic
1735 Development Initiative and for providing assistance throughout
1736 the agency in the implementation of REDI activities.

1737 (7)

1738 ~~(c) Each rural area of opportunity may designate catalyst~~
1739 ~~projects, provided that each catalyst project is specifically~~
1740 ~~recommended by REDI and confirmed as a catalyst project by the~~
1741 ~~department. All state agencies and departments shall use all~~
1742 ~~available tools and resources to the extent permissible by law~~
1743 ~~to promote the creation and development of each catalyst project~~
1744 ~~and the development of catalyst sites.~~

1745 (8) REDI shall submit a report to the Office of Rural
1746 Prosperity ~~department~~ on all REDI activities for the previous
1747 fiscal year as a supplement to the office's ~~department's~~ annual
1748 report required under s. 288.013 ~~s. 20.60~~. This supplementary
1749 report must include:

1750 (a) A status report on every project ~~all projects~~

1751 currently being coordinated through REDI, the number of
1752 preferential awards and allowances made pursuant to this section
1753 in detail by award, allowance, or match type, the dollar amount
1754 of such awards, and the names of the recipients.

1755 (b) A description of all waivers of program requirements
1756 granted, including a list by program of each waiver that was
1757 granted. If waivers were requested but were not granted, a list
1758 of ungranted waivers, including reasons why the waivers were not
1759 granted, must be included.

1760 (c) Detailed information as to the economic impact of the
1761 projects coordinated by REDI.

1762 (d) Recommendations based on the review and evaluation of
1763 statutes and rules having an adverse impact on rural communities
1764 and proposals to mitigate such adverse impacts.

1765 (e) Legislative recommendations for statutory waivers or
1766 reductions of specified economic development program
1767 requirements, including financial match waivers or reductions,
1768 for applicants within rural areas of opportunity.

1769 (f) Outcomes of proposals submitted pursuant to s.
1770 288.019.

1771 **Section 20.** Section 288.06561, Florida Statutes, is
1772 repealed.

1773 **Section 21. Subsections (2), (3), and (4) of section**
1774 **288.0657, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

1775 288.0657 Florida rural economic development strategy

HB 1427

2025

1776 grants.-

1777 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity shall provide
1778 ~~department may accept and administer moneys appropriated to the~~
1779 ~~department for providing~~ grants to assist rural communities to
1780 develop and implement strategic economic development plans.
1781 Grants may be provided to assist with costs associated with
1782 marketing a site to business and site selectors for an economic
1783 development project that is part of an economic development
1784 plan, either as part of funding to develop and implement a plan
1785 or related to an already adopted plan.

1786 (3) A rural community, an economic development
1787 organization in a rural area, or a regional organization
1788 representing at least one rural community or such economic
1789 development organizations may apply for such grants. The rural
1790 liaison for the rural community shall assist those applying for
1791 such grants.

1792 (4) The office ~~department~~ shall establish criteria for
1793 reviewing grant applications. These criteria must ~~shall~~ include,
1794 but are not limited to, the degree of participation and
1795 commitment by the local community and the application's
1796 consistency with local comprehensive plans or the application's
1797 proposal to ensure such consistency. Grants for marketing may
1798 include funding for advertising campaign materials and costs
1799 associated with meetings, trade missions, and professional
1800 development affiliated with site preparation and marketing. The

1801 ~~office department shall review each application for a grant. The~~
1802 ~~department may approve grants only to the extent that funds are~~
1803 ~~appropriated for such grants by the Legislature.~~

1804 **Section 22. Paragraph (f) of subsection (2) and paragraphs**
1805 **(a), (b), and (c) of subsection (4) of section 288.9961, Florida**
1806 **Statutes, are amended, and subsections (6) and (7) are added to**
1807 **that section, to read:**

1808 288.9961 Promotion of broadband adoption; Florida Office
1809 of Broadband.—

1810 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

1811 (f) "Underserved" means a geographic area of this state in
1812 which there is no provider of broadband Internet service that
1813 offers a connection to the Internet with a capacity for
1814 transmission at a consistent speed of at least 100 megabits per
1815 second downstream and at least 20 ~~10~~ megabits per second
1816 upstream.

1817 (4) FLORIDA OFFICE OF BROADBAND.—The Florida Office of
1818 Broadband is created within the Division of Community
1819 Development in the department for the purpose of developing,
1820 marketing, and promoting broadband Internet services in this
1821 state. The office, in the performance of its duties, shall do
1822 all of the following:

1823 (a) Create a strategic plan that has goals and strategies
1824 for increasing and improving the availability of, access to, and
1825 use of broadband Internet service in this state. In development

1826 of the plan, the department shall incorporate applicable federal
1827 broadband activities, including any efforts or initiatives of
1828 the Federal Communications Commission, to improve broadband
1829 Internet service in this state. The plan must identify available
1830 federal funding sources for the expansion or improvement of
1831 broadband. The strategic plan must be submitted to the Governor,
1832 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
1833 Representatives by June 30, 2022. The strategic plan must be
1834 updated biennially thereafter. The plan must include a process
1835 to review and verify public input regarding transmission speeds
1836 and availability of broadband Internet service throughout this
1837 state. The office shall consult with each regional rural
1838 community liaison center within the Office of Rural Prosperity
1839 on the development and update of the plan.

1840 (b) Build and facilitate local technology planning teams
1841 or partnerships with members representing cross-sections of the
1842 community, which may include, but are not limited to,
1843 representatives from the following organizations and industries:
1844 libraries, K-12 education, colleges and universities, local
1845 health care providers, private businesses, community
1846 organizations, economic development organizations, local
1847 governments, tourism, parks and recreation, and agriculture. The
1848 local technology planning teams or partnerships shall work with
1849 rural communities to help the communities understand their
1850 current broadband availability, locate unserved and underserved

1851 businesses and residents, identify assets relevant to broadband
1852 deployment, build partnerships with broadband service providers,
1853 and identify opportunities to leverage assets and reduce
1854 barriers to the deployment of broadband Internet services in the
1855 community. The teams or partnerships must be proactive in rural
1856 communities as defined in s. 288.0656 ~~fiscally constrained~~
1857 ~~counties~~ in identifying and providing assistance, in
1858 coordination with the regional rural community liaison centers
1859 within the Office of Rural Prosperity, with applying for federal
1860 grants for broadband Internet service.

1861 (c) Provide technical and planning assistance to rural
1862 communities in coordination with the regional rural community
1863 liaison centers within the Office of Rural Prosperity.

1864 (6) The office shall submit to the Governor, the President
1865 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a
1866 quarterly report detailing the implementation of broadband
1867 activities in rural, unserved, and underserved communities. Such
1868 information must be listed by county and include the amount of
1869 state and federal funds allocated and expended in the county by
1870 program; the progress toward deploying broadband in the county;
1871 any technical assistance provided; the activities of the local
1872 technology planning teams and partnerships; and the fulfillment
1873 of any other duties of the office required by this part.

1874 (7) By December 31 each year, the office shall submit to
1875 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of

1876 the House of Representatives an annual report on the office's
1877 operations and accomplishments for that calendar year and the
1878 status of broadband Internet service access and use in this
1879 state. The report must also incorporate the quarterly reports on
1880 rural, unserved, and underserved communities required by
1881 subsection (6).

1882 **Section 23.** Section 290.06561, Florida Statutes, is
1883 repealed.

1884 **Section 24. Paragraph (a) of subsection (5) of section**
1885 **319.32, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

1886 319.32 Fees; service charges; disposition.—

1887 (5) (a) Forty-seven dollars of each fee collected, except
1888 for fees charged on a certificate of title for a motor vehicle
1889 for hire registered under s. 320.08(6), for each applicable
1890 original certificate of title and each applicable duplicate copy
1891 of a certificate of title shall be deposited as follows: ~~into~~
1892 ~~the State Transportation Trust Fund. Deposits to the State~~
1893 ~~Transportation Trust Fund pursuant to this paragraph may not~~
1894 ~~exceed \$200 million in any fiscal year, and from any collections~~
1895 ~~in excess of that amount during the fiscal year,~~

1896 1. The first \$30 million collected shall be deposited into
1897 the Highway Safety Operating Trust Fund; ~~and~~

1898 2. Any remaining collections shall be paid into the State
1899 Transportation Trust General Revenue Fund.

1900 **Section 25. Subsection (37) is added to section 334.044,**

1901 **Florida Statutes, to read:**

1902 334.044 Powers and duties of the department.—The
 1903 department shall have the following general powers and duties:

1904 (37) To provide technical assistance and support from the
 1905 appropriate district of the department to counties that are not
 1906 located in a metropolitan planning organization created pursuant
 1907 to s. 339.175.

1908 **Section 26. Section 339.0801, Florida Statutes, is amended**
 1909 **to read:**

1910 339.0801 Allocation of increased revenues derived from
 1911 amendments to s. 319.32(5)(a) ~~by ch. 2012-128.~~—

1912 (1) The first \$200 million of funds that result from
 1913 increased revenues to the State Transportation Trust Fund
 1914 derived from the amendments to s. 319.32(5)(a) made by s. 11,
 1915 chapter 2012-128, Laws of Florida, this act must be used
 1916 annually, first as set forth in paragraph (a) subsection (1) and
 1917 then as set forth in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) subsections
 1918 (2)–(4), notwithstanding any other provision of law:

1919 (a) 1. (1) (a) Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and
 1920 annually for 30 years thereafter, \$10 million shall be for the
 1921 purpose of funding any seaport project identified in the adopted
 1922 work program of the Department of Transportation, to be known as
 1923 the Seaport Investment Program.

1924 2. (b) The revenues may be assigned, pledged, or set aside
 1925 as a trust for the payment of principal or interest on revenue

1926 | bonds, or other forms of indebtedness issued by an individual
1927 | port or appropriate local government having jurisdiction
1928 | thereof, or collectively by interlocal agreement among any of
1929 | the ports, or used to purchase credit support to permit such
1930 | borrowings. Alternatively, revenue bonds shall be issued by the
1931 | Division of Bond Finance at the request of the Department of
1932 | Transportation under the State Bond Act and shall be secured by
1933 | such revenues as are provided in this subsection.

1934 | 3.~~(e)~~ Revenue bonds or other indebtedness issued hereunder
1935 | are not a general obligation of the state and are secured solely
1936 | by a first lien on the revenues distributed under this
1937 | subsection.

1938 | 4.~~(d)~~ The state covenants with holders of the revenue
1939 | bonds or other instruments of indebtedness issued pursuant to
1940 | this subsection that it will not repeal this subsection; nor
1941 | take any other action, including but not limited to amending
1942 | this subsection, that will materially and adversely affect the
1943 | rights of such holders so long as revenue bonds or other
1944 | indebtedness authorized by this subsection are outstanding.

1945 | 5.~~(e)~~ The proceeds of any revenue bonds or other
1946 | indebtedness, after payment of costs of issuance and
1947 | establishment of any required reserves, shall be invested in
1948 | projects approved by the Department of Transportation and
1949 | included in the department's adopted work program, by amendment
1950 | if necessary. As required under s. 11(f), Art. VII of the State

1951 Constitution, the Legislature approves projects included in the
1952 department's adopted work program, including any projects added
1953 to the work program by amendment under s. 339.135(7).

1954 6.~~(f)~~ Any revenues that are not used for the payment of
1955 bonds as authorized by this subsection may be used for purposes
1956 authorized under the Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic
1957 Development Program. This revenue source is in addition to any
1958 amounts provided for and appropriated in accordance with ss.
1959 311.07 and 320.20(3) and (4).

1960 (b)~~(2)~~ Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and annually
1961 thereafter, \$10 million shall be transferred to the
1962 Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund, to be used as specified
1963 in s. 427.0159.

1964 (c)~~(3)~~ Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and annually
1965 thereafter, \$10 million shall be allocated to the Small County
1966 Outreach Program to be used as specified in s. 339.2818. These
1967 funds are in addition to the funds provided for the program
1968 pursuant to s. 201.15(4)(a)2.

1969 (d)~~(4)~~ After the distributions required pursuant to
1970 paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) ~~subsections (1)-(3)~~, the remaining
1971 funds shall be used annually for transportation projects within
1972 this state for existing or planned strategic transportation
1973 projects which connect major markets within this state or
1974 between this state and other states, which focus on job
1975 creation, and which increase this state's viability in the

1976 national and global markets.

1977 (2) The remaining funds that result from increased revenue
 1978 to the State Transportation Trust Fund derived pursuant to s.
 1979 319.32(5) (a) must be used annually, notwithstanding any other
 1980 law, beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year and annually
 1981 thereafter, for the Small County Road Assistance Program as
 1982 prescribed in s. 339.2816.

1983 (3)-(5) Pursuant to s. 339.135(7), the department shall
 1984 amend the work program to add the projects provided for in this
 1985 section.

1986 **Section 27. Subsection (3) and paragraph (a) of subsection**
 1987 **(4) of section 339.2816, Florida Statutes, are amended, and**
 1988 **paragraph (c) of subsection (4) of that section is reenacted, to**
 1989 **read:**

1990 339.2816 Small County Road Assistance Program.—

1991 (3) Beginning with fiscal year ~~1999-2000 until fiscal year~~
 1992 ~~2009-2010, and beginning again with fiscal year 2012-2013, up to~~
 1993 \$25 million annually from the State Transportation Trust Fund
 1994 must ~~may~~ be used for the purposes of funding the Small County
 1995 Road Assistance Program as described in this section. In
 1996 addition, beginning with fiscal year 2025-2026, the department
 1997 must use the additional revenues allocated by s. 339.0801 for
 1998 the Small County Road Assistance Program.

1999 (4) (a) Small counties shall be eligible to compete for
 2000 funds that have been designated for the Small County Road

2001 Assistance Program for resurfacing or reconstruction projects on
 2002 county roads that were part of the county road system on June
 2003 10, 1995. Capacity improvements on county roads are ~~shall~~ not be
 2004 eligible for funding under the program unless a safety issue
 2005 exists or the department finds it necessary to widen existing
 2006 lanes as part of a resurfacing or reconstruction project.

2007 (c) The following criteria must be used to prioritize road
 2008 projects for funding under the program:

2009 1. The primary criterion is the physical condition of the
 2010 road as measured by the department.

2011 2. As secondary criteria the department may consider:

2012 a. Whether a road is used as an evacuation route.

2013 b. Whether a road has high levels of agricultural travel.

2014 c. Whether a road is considered a major arterial route.

2015 d. Whether a road is considered a feeder road.

2016 e. Whether a road is located in a fiscally constrained
 2017 county, as defined in s. 218.67(1).

2018 f. Other criteria related to the impact of a project on
 2019 the public road system or on the state or local economy as
 2020 determined by the department.

2021 **Section 28. Subsections (1), (2), (3), (6), (7), and (8)**
 2022 **of section 339.2818, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

2023 339.2818 Small County Outreach Program.—

2024 (1) There is created within the department ~~of~~

2025 ~~Transportation~~ the Small County Outreach Program. The purpose of

HB 1427

2025

2026 | this program is to assist small county governments in repairing
2027 | or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads,
2028 | addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or
2029 | reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety
2030 | improvements to county roads.

2031 | (2) For the purposes of this section, the term "small
2032 | county" means any county that has a population of 200,000 or
2033 | less as determined by the most recent official population census
2034 | determination estimate pursuant to s. 186.901.

2035 | ~~(3) Funds allocated under this program, pursuant to s. 4,~~
2036 | ~~ch. 2000-257, Laws of Florida, are in addition to any funds~~
2037 | ~~provided pursuant to s. 339.2816, for the Small County Road~~
2038 | ~~Assistance Program.~~

2039 | (5)~~(6)~~ Funds paid into the State Transportation Trust Fund
2040 | pursuant to ss. 201.15, 320.072, and 339.0801 ~~s. 201.15~~ for the
2041 | purposes of the Small County Outreach Program are hereby
2042 | annually appropriated for expenditure to support the Small
2043 | County Outreach Program.

2044 | (6)~~(7)~~ Subject to a specific appropriation in addition to
2045 | funds annually appropriated for projects under this section, a
2046 | municipality within a rural area of opportunity or a rural area
2047 | of opportunity community designated under s. 288.0656(7)(a) may
2048 | compete for the additional project funding using the criteria
2049 | listed in subsection (3) ~~(4)~~ at up to 100 percent of project
2050 | costs, excluding capacity improvement projects.

2051 ~~(8) Subject to a specific appropriation in addition to~~
 2052 ~~funds appropriated for projects under this section, a local~~
 2053 ~~government either wholly or partially within the Everglades~~
 2054 ~~Agricultural Area as defined in s. 373.4592(15), the Peace River~~
 2055 ~~Basin, or the Suwannee River Basin may compete for additional~~
 2056 ~~funding using the criteria listed in paragraph (4)(c) at up to~~
 2057 ~~100 percent of project costs on state or county roads used~~
 2058 ~~primarily as farm-to-market connections between rural~~
 2059 ~~agricultural areas and market distribution centers, excluding~~
 2060 ~~capacity improvement projects.~~

2061 **Section 29. Section 339.68 is amended to read:**

2062 (Substantial rewording of section.

2063 See s. 339.68, F.S., for present text.)

2064 339.68 Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program.—

2065 (1) The Legislature finds that increasing demands continue
 2066 to be placed on rural arterial roads in this state by a fast-
 2067 growing economy, continued population growth, and increased
 2068 tourism. Investment in the rural arterial roads of this state is
 2069 needed to maintain the safety, mobility, reliability, and
 2070 resiliency of the transportation system in order to support the
 2071 movement of people, goods, and commodities; to enhance economic
 2072 prosperity and competitiveness; and to enrich the quality of
 2073 life of the rural communities and the environment of this state.

2074 (2) The Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program is
 2075 created within the department to make capacity and safety

2076 improvements to two-lane arterial roads located in rural
2077 communities. For purposes of this section, the term "rural
2078 community" has the same meaning as provided in s. 288.0656.

2079 (3) Beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the department
2080 shall allocate from the State Transportation Trust Fund a
2081 minimum of \$50 million in each fiscal year for purposes of
2082 funding the program. This funding is in addition to any other
2083 funding provided to the program by any other law.

2084 (4) The department shall use the following criteria to
2085 prioritize projects for funding under the program:

2086 (a) Whether the road has documented safety concerns or
2087 requires additional safety and design improvements. This may be
2088 evidenced by the number of fatalities or crashes per vehicle
2089 mile traveled.

2090 (b) Whether the road has or is projected to have a
2091 significant amount of truck tractor traffic as determined by the
2092 department. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "truck
2093 tractor" has the same meaning as in s. 320.01(11).

2094 (c) Whether the road is used to transport agricultural
2095 products and commodities from the farm to the market or other
2096 sale or distribution point.

2097 (d) Whether the road is used to transport goods to or from
2098 warehouses, distribution centers, or intermodal logistics
2099 centers as defined in s. 311.101(2).

2100 (e) Whether the road is used as an evacuation route.

2101 (f) Whether the physical condition of the road meets
2102 department standards.

2103 (g) Whether the road currently has, or is projected to
2104 have within the next 5 years, a level of service of D, E, or F.

2105 (h) Any other criteria related to the impact of a project
2106 on the public road system or on the state or local economy as
2107 determined by the department.

2108 (5) By January 1, 2027, and every 2 years thereafter, the
2109 department shall submit to the Governor, the President of the
2110 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report
2111 regarding the use and condition of arterial roads located in
2112 rural communities, which report must include the following:

2113 (a) A map of roads located in rural communities which are
2114 designated as arterial roads.

2115 (b) A needs assessment that must include, but is not
2116 limited to, consideration of infrastructure improvements to
2117 improve capacity on arterial roads in rural communities.

2118 (c) A synopsis of the department's project prioritization
2119 process.

2120 (d) An estimate of the local and state economic impact of
2121 improving capacity on arterial roads in rural communities.

2122 (e) A listing of the arterial roads and the associated
2123 improvements to be included in the program and a schedule or
2124 timeline for the inclusion of such projects in the work program.

2125 **Section 30.** (1) The Department of Transportation shall

2126 allocate the additional funds provided by this act to implement
2127 the Small County Road Assistance Program as created by s.
2128 339.2816, Florida Statutes, and amend the current tentative work
2129 program for the 2025-2026 through 2031-2032 fiscal years to
2130 include additional projects. In addition, before adoption of the
2131 work program, the department shall submit a budget amendment
2132 pursuant to s. 339.135(7), Florida Statutes, requesting budget
2133 authority necessary to implement the additional projects.

2134 (2) The department shall allocate sufficient funds to
2135 implement the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program,
2136 develop a plan to expend the revenues as specified in s. 339.68,
2137 Florida Statutes, and, before its adoption, amend the current
2138 tentative work program for the 2025-2026 through 2031-2032
2139 fiscal years to include the program's projects. In addition,
2140 before adoption of the work program, the department shall submit
2141 a budget amendment pursuant to s. 339.135(7), Florida Statutes,
2142 requesting budget authority necessary to implement the program
2143 as specified in s. 339.68, Florida Statutes.

2144 (3) Notwithstanding any other law, the increase in revenue
2145 to the State Transportation Trust Fund derived from the
2146 amendments to ss. 201.15 and 319.32, Florida Statutes, made by
2147 this act and deposited into the trust fund pursuant to ss.
2148 201.15 and 339.0801, Florida Statutes, shall be used by the
2149 department to fund the programs as specified in this section.

2150 **Section 31. Section 381.403, Florida Statutes, is created**

2151 **to read:**

2152 381.403 Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant
2153 Program.—The Legislature recognizes that access to primary and
2154 preventive health care is critical for the well-being of the
2155 residents of this state. The Legislature also recognizes that
2156 many rural areas of this state have significantly fewer
2157 available physicians and autonomous advanced practice registered
2158 nurses who serve those areas. To increase the availability of
2159 health care in such underserved rural areas, there is created
2160 the Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant Program
2161 within the Department of Health to use grants to incentivize
2162 physicians and autonomous advanced practice registered nurses to
2163 open or expand practices in those areas.

2164 (1) As used in this section, the term:

2165 (a) "Autonomous advanced practice registered nurse" means
2166 an advanced practice registered nurse who is registered under s.
2167 464.0123 to engage in autonomous practice.

2168 (b) "Majority ownership" means ownership of more than 50
2169 percent of the interests in a private practice.

2170 (c) "Physician" means a physician licensed under chapter
2171 458 or chapter 459.

2172 (d) "Preventive care" means routine health care services
2173 designed to prevent illness. The term includes, but is not
2174 limited to, general physical examinations provided on an annual
2175 basis, screenings for acute or chronic illnesses, and patient

2176 counseling to promote overall wellness and avoid the need for
2177 emergency services.

2178 (e) "Primary care" means health care services focused
2179 primarily on preventive care, wellness care, and treatment for
2180 common illnesses. The term may include the health care provider
2181 serving as a patient's entry point into the overall health care
2182 system and coordinating a patient's care among specialists or
2183 acute care settings. The term does not include elective services
2184 provided solely for cosmetic purposes.

2185 (f) "Program" means the Rural Access to Primary and
2186 Preventive Care Grant Program.

2187 (g) "Qualifying rural area" means a rural community as
2188 defined in s. 288.0657 in this state which is also designated as
2189 a health professional shortage area by the Health Resources and
2190 Services Administration of the United States Department of
2191 Health and Human Services.

2192 (2) The department shall award grants under the program to
2193 physicians and autonomous advanced practice registered nurses
2194 who intend to open a new private practice in a qualifying rural
2195 area or who intend to open a new location within a qualifying
2196 rural area if the current private practice is located in a
2197 different county. To qualify for a grant, an applicant must meet
2198 all of the following criteria:

2199 (a) The practice must:

2200 1. Have majority ownership by physicians or autonomous

2201 advanced practice registered nurses. Majority ownership may
2202 include up to five physicians or autonomous advanced practice
2203 registered nurses in partnership.

2204 2. Be physically located in a qualifying rural area and
2205 serve at that location patients who live in that qualifying
2206 rural area or in other nearby qualifying rural areas. While the
2207 practice may use telehealth to supplement the services provided
2208 at the location, the majority of services provided by the
2209 practice must be provided at the physical location.

2210 3. Accept Medicaid patients.

2211 4. Provide services in one or more of the following
2212 specialties:

2213 a. If the practice has majority ownership by one or more
2214 autonomous advanced practice registered nurses, provide services
2215 solely in primary or preventive care.

2216 b. If the practice has majority ownership by one or more
2217 physicians, provide services in primary care, obstetrics,
2218 gynecology, general and family practice, geriatrics, internal
2219 medicine, pediatrics, or psychiatry.

2220 (b) The owners of the practice must commit to providing
2221 the following information to the department on an annual basis,
2222 and upon request by the department:

2223 1. Deidentified patient encounter data.

2224 2. A detailed report on the use of grant funds until such
2225 funds are expended.

2226 (3) By March 1, 2026, the department shall create an
2227 application process for eligible physicians and autonomous
2228 advanced practice registered nurses to apply for grants under
2229 the program. The application must require a detailed budget of
2230 anticipated use of grant funds and how the new or existing
2231 practice will meet the requirements of subsection (2). The
2232 department shall establish a ranking system to determine which
2233 applicants will be awarded grants if there are more applicants
2234 for the program than can be awarded grants with available
2235 appropriated funds.

2236 (4) Subject to specific appropriation, the department may
2237 award grants of up to \$250,000 to eligible applicants. Only one
2238 grant may be awarded per practice. Grant funds awarded for
2239 establishing a new private practice or a new practice location
2240 may be used for any of the following expenses:

2241 (a) Facility construction, acquisition, renovation, or
2242 lease.

2243 (b) Purchasing medical equipment.

2244 (c) Purchasing or implementing information technology
2245 equipment or services.

2246 (d) Purchasing or implementing telehealth technology.

2247 (e) Training on the use of medical equipment, information
2248 technology, or telehealth technology implemented under paragraph
2249 (b), paragraph (c), or paragraph (d), respectively.

2250 (5) Grant funds may not be used for any of the following:

- 2251 (a) Salaries.
- 2252 (b) Utilities.
- 2253 (c) Internet or telecommunications services other than
 2254 those necessary for implementing telehealth technology under
 2255 paragraph (4) (d).
- 2256 (d) Insurance.
- 2257 (e) Incidental maintenance and repairs.
- 2258 (f) Disposable medical supplies.
- 2259 (g) Medicines or vaccines.
- 2260 (h) Licensing or certification fees, including costs for
 2261 continuing education other than training under paragraph (4) (e).
- 2262 (6) The department shall enter into a contract with each
 2263 grant recipient which details the requirements for the
 2264 expenditure of grant funds for that recipient. The contract must
 2265 include, at a minimum, all of the following:
- 2266 (a) The purpose of the contract.
- 2267 (b) Specific performance standards and responsibilities
 2268 for the recipient under the contract, including penalties for
 2269 not meeting such performance standards and responsibilities.
- 2270 (c) A detailed project or contract budget, if applicable.
- 2271 (d) Reporting requirements for grant recipients to provide
 2272 information to the department under paragraph (2) (b) as well as
 2273 any additional information the department deems necessary for
 2274 the administration of the program.
- 2275 (7) The department may adopt rules to implement the

2276 program.

2277 (8) Beginning July 1, 2026, and each year thereafter in

2278 which there are outstanding contracts with grant recipients

2279 under subsection (6), the department shall provide a report to

2280 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of

2281 the House of Representatives which includes, but need not be

2282 limited to, all of the following:

2283 (a) Each grant awarded, including the proposed uses for

2284 each grant.

2285 (b) The progress on each outstanding contract.

2286 (c) The number of patients residing in rural areas who

2287 were served by grant awardees.

2288 (d) The number of Medicaid recipients who were served by

2289 grant awardees.

2290 (e) The number and types of services provided during

2291 patient encounters in locations opened under the program.

2292 (f) The number of health care practitioners, delineated by

2293 licensure type, providing services in locations opened under the

2294 program.

2295 (9) This section is repealed July 1, 2035, unless reviewed

2296 and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

2297 **Section 32. Section 381.9856, Florida Statutes, is created**

2298 **to read:**

2299 381.9856 Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and

2300 Education Grant Program.—

2301 (1) PROGRAM CREATION.—The Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric
2302 Response and Education (SCORE) Grant Program is created within
2303 the Department of Health.

2304 (2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program is to improve
2305 patient outcomes and the coordination of emergency medical care
2306 in rural communities by increasing access to high-quality
2307 stroke, cardiac, and obstetric care through the application of
2308 technology and innovative training, such as blended learning
2309 training programs. Blended learning training programs ensure
2310 that participants gain both the theoretical foundations of
2311 diagnosis and management as well as real-world clinical
2312 experience through scenario-based learning, ultimately enhancing
2313 decisionmaking and patient outcomes.

2314 (3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

2315 (a) "Blended learning training program" means a structured
2316 educational model that uses blended learning methodologies,
2317 including simulation-based training, virtual reality, and
2318 distance learning technologies, in conjunction with hands-on
2319 instruction, such as simulation-based practice, and in-person
2320 skills sessions to provide comprehensive education.

2321 (b) "High-risk care provider" means a licensed health care
2322 facility or licensed ambulance service that regularly provides
2323 emergency or ongoing care to patients experiencing a stroke,
2324 heart attack, or pregnancy-related emergency.

2325 (c) "Rural community" has the same meaning as provided in

2326 | s. 288.0657.

2327 | (4) GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

2328 | (a) The department shall award grants to high-risk care
2329 | providers serving rural communities to accomplish at least one
2330 | of the following initiatives:

2331 | 1. Implement a blended learning training program for
2332 | health care providers in stroke care protocols and best
2333 | practices.

2334 | 2. Purchase simulation equipment and technology for
2335 | training.

2336 | 3. Establish telehealth capabilities between prehospital
2337 | providers, such as paramedics or emergency medical technicians,
2338 | and in-hospital providers, such as neurologists, to expedite
2339 | emergency stroke care, emergency cardiac care, or emergency
2340 | obstetric care.

2341 | 4. Develop quality improvement programs in one or more of
2342 | the following specialty areas: emergency stroke care, emergency
2343 | cardiac care, or emergency obstetric care.

2344 | (b) Priority must be given to proposals that:

2345 | 1. Demonstrate collaboration between prehospital and in-
2346 | hospital providers; or

2347 | 2. Show potential for significant improvement in patient
2348 | outcomes in rural communities.

2349 | (5) FUNDING LIMITS; REPORTING.—

2350 | (a) Individual grants may not exceed \$100,000 per year.

2351 (b) Grant recipients must submit quarterly reports to the
 2352 department documenting program activities, expenditures, and
 2353 outcomes.

2354 (6) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall monitor program
 2355 implementation and outcomes. The department shall submit an
 2356 annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and
 2357 the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of
 2358 each year, detailing program implementation and outcomes.

2359 (7) RULEMAKING.—The department may adopt rules to
 2360 implement this section.

2361 (8) IMPLEMENTATION.—This section may be implemented only
 2362 to the extent specifically funded by legislative appropriation.

2363 (9) REPEAL.—This section is repealed July 1, 2030, unless
 2364 reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the
 2365 Legislature.

2366 **Section 33. Subsection (2) of section 395.6061, Florida**
 2367 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

2368 395.6061 Rural hospital capital improvement.—There is
 2369 established a rural hospital capital improvement grant program.

2370 (2)(a) Each rural hospital as defined in s. 395.602 shall
 2371 receive a minimum of \$100,000 annually, subject to legislative
 2372 appropriation, upon application to the Department of Health, for
 2373 projects to acquire, repair, improve, or upgrade systems,
 2374 facilities, or equipment. Such projects may include, but are not
 2375 limited to, the following:

2376 1. Establishing mobile care units to provide primary care
2377 services, behavioral health services, or obstetric and
2378 gynecological services in rural health professional shortage
2379 areas.

2380 2. Establishing telehealth kiosks to provide urgent care
2381 and primary care services remotely in rural health professional
2382 shortage areas.

2383 (b) As used in this subsection, the term:

2384 1. "Preventive care" means routine health care services
2385 designed to prevent illness. The term includes, but is not
2386 limited to, general physical examinations provided on an annual
2387 basis, screenings for acute or chronic illnesses, and patient
2388 counseling to promote overall wellness and avoid the need for
2389 emergency services.

2390 2. "Primary care" means health care services focused
2391 primarily on preventive care, wellness care, and treatment for
2392 common illnesses. The term may include the health care provider
2393 serving as a patient's entry point into the overall health care
2394 system and coordinating a patient's care among specialists or
2395 acute care settings. The term does not include elective services
2396 provided solely for cosmetic purposes.

2397 3. "Rural health professional shortage area" means a rural
2398 community as defined in s. 288.0657 which is also designated as
2399 a health professional shortage area by the Health Resources and
2400 Services Administration of the United States Department of

2401 Health and Human Services.

2402 **Section 34. Subsection (3) of section 420.9073, Florida**
 2403 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

2404 420.9073 Local housing distributions.—

2405 (3) Calculation of guaranteed amounts:

2406 (a) The guaranteed amount under subsection (1) shall be
 2407 calculated for each state fiscal year by multiplying \$1 million
 2408 ~~\$350,000~~ by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of
 2409 funds distributed to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund
 2410 pursuant to s. 201.15(4) (c) and the denominator of which is the
 2411 total amount of funds distributed to the Local Government
 2412 Housing Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15.

2413 (b) The guaranteed amount under subsection (2) shall be
 2414 calculated for each state fiscal year by multiplying \$1 million
 2415 ~~\$350,000~~ by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of
 2416 funds distributed to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund
 2417 pursuant to s. 201.15(4) (d) and the denominator of which is the
 2418 total amount of funds distributed to the Local Government
 2419 Housing Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15.

2420 **Section 35. Paragraph (n) of subsection (5) of section**
 2421 **420.9075, Florida Statutes, is amended, paragraph (o) is added**
 2422 **to that subsection, and paragraph (b) of subsection (13) of that**
 2423 **section is reenacted, to read:**

2424 420.9075 Local housing assistance plans; partnerships.—

2425 (5) The following criteria apply to awards made to

2426 eligible sponsors or eligible persons for the purpose of
2427 providing eligible housing:

2428 (n) Funds from the local housing distribution not used to
2429 meet the criteria established in paragraph (a), ~~or~~ paragraph
2430 (c), or paragraph (o), or not used for the administration of a
2431 local housing assistance plan must be used for housing
2432 production and finance activities, including, but not limited
2433 to, financing preconstruction activities or the purchase of
2434 existing units, providing rental housing, and providing home
2435 ownership training to prospective home buyers and owners of
2436 homes assisted through the local housing assistance plan.

2437 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (a) and
2438 (c), program income as defined in s. 420.9071(26) may also be
2439 used to fund activities described in this paragraph.

2440 2. When preconstruction due-diligence activities conducted
2441 as part of a preservation strategy show that preservation of the
2442 units is not feasible and will not result in the production of
2443 an eligible unit, such costs shall be deemed a program expense
2444 rather than an administrative expense if such program expenses
2445 do not exceed 3 percent of the annual local housing
2446 distribution.

2447 3. If both an award under the local housing assistance
2448 plan and federal low-income housing tax credits are used to
2449 assist a project and there is a conflict between the criteria
2450 prescribed in this subsection and the requirements of s. 42 of

2451 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, the county or
2452 eligible municipality may resolve the conflict by giving
2453 precedence to the requirements of s. 42 of the Internal Revenue
2454 Code of 1986, as amended, in lieu of following the criteria
2455 prescribed in this subsection with the exception of paragraphs
2456 (a) and (g) of this subsection.

2457 4. Each county and each eligible municipality may award
2458 funds as a grant for construction, rehabilitation, or repair as
2459 part of disaster recovery or emergency repairs or to remedy
2460 accessibility or health and safety deficiencies. Any other
2461 grants must be approved as part of the local housing assistance
2462 plan.

2463 (o) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a) and (c), up to 25
2464 percent of the funds made available in each county and eligible
2465 municipality from the local housing distribution may be used to
2466 preserve multifamily affordable rental housing funded through
2467 United States Department of Agriculture loans. These funds may
2468 be used to rehabilitate housing, extend affordability periods,
2469 or acquire or transfer properties in partnership with private
2470 organizations. This paragraph expires on June 30, 2031.

2471 (13)

2472 (b) If, as a result of its review of the annual report,
2473 the corporation determines that a county or eligible
2474 municipality has failed to implement a local housing incentive
2475 strategy, or, if applicable, a local housing incentive plan, it

2476 shall send a notice of termination of the local government's
2477 share of the local housing distribution by certified mail to the
2478 affected county or eligible municipality.

2479 1. The notice must specify a date of termination of the
2480 funding if the affected county or eligible municipality does not
2481 implement the plan or strategy and provide for a local response.
2482 A county or eligible municipality shall respond to the
2483 corporation within 30 days after receipt of the notice of
2484 termination.

2485 2. The corporation shall consider the local response that
2486 extenuating circumstances precluded implementation and grant an
2487 extension to the timeframe for implementation. Such an extension
2488 shall be made in the form of an extension agreement that
2489 provides a timeframe for implementation. The chief elected
2490 official of a county or eligible municipality or his or her
2491 designee shall have the authority to enter into the agreement on
2492 behalf of the local government.

2493 3. If the county or the eligible municipality has not
2494 implemented the incentive strategy or entered into an extension
2495 agreement by the termination date specified in the notice, the
2496 local housing distribution share terminates, and any uncommitted
2497 local housing distribution funds held by the affected county or
2498 eligible municipality in its local housing assistance trust fund
2499 shall be transferred to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund
2500 to the credit of the corporation to administer.

2501 4.a. If the affected local government fails to meet the
 2502 timeframes specified in the agreement, the corporation shall
 2503 terminate funds. The corporation shall send a notice of
 2504 termination of the local government's share of the local housing
 2505 distribution by certified mail to the affected local government.
 2506 The notice shall specify the termination date, and any
 2507 uncommitted funds held by the affected local government shall be
 2508 transferred to the Local Government Housing Trust Fund to the
 2509 credit of the corporation to administer.

2510 b. If the corporation terminates funds to a county, but an
 2511 eligible municipality receiving a local housing distribution
 2512 pursuant to an interlocal agreement maintains compliance with
 2513 program requirements, the corporation shall thereafter
 2514 distribute directly to the participating eligible municipality
 2515 its share calculated in the manner provided in ss. 420.9072 and
 2516 420.9073.

2517 c. Any county or eligible municipality whose local
 2518 distribution share has been terminated may subsequently elect to
 2519 receive directly its local distribution share by adopting the
 2520 ordinance, resolution, and local housing assistance plan in the
 2521 manner and according to the procedures provided in ss. 420.907-
 2522 420.9079.

2523 **Section 36. Subsections (1), (2), and (5) of section**
 2524 **1001.451, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (6) is**
 2525 **added to that section, to read:**

2526 | 1001.451 Regional consortium service organizations.—In
 2527 | order to provide a full range of programs to larger numbers of
 2528 | students, minimize duplication of services, and encourage the
 2529 | development of new programs and services:

2530 | (1) School districts with 20,000 or fewer unweighted full-
 2531 | time equivalent students, developmental research (laboratory)
 2532 | schools established pursuant to s. 1002.32, and the Florida
 2533 | School for the Deaf and the Blind may enter into cooperative
 2534 | agreements to form a regional consortium service organization.
 2535 | Each regional consortium service organization shall provide any
 2536 | of, at a minimum, three of the following services determined
 2537 | necessary and appropriate by the board of directors:

- 2538 | (a) Exceptional student education;
- 2539 | (b) Safe schools support ~~teacher education centers;~~
 2540 | environmental education;
- 2541 | (c) State and federal grant procurement and coordination;
- 2542 | (d) Data services processing; health
- 2543 | (e) Insurance services;
- 2544 | (f) Risk management ~~insurance~~;
- 2545 | (g) Professional learning;
- 2546 | (h) College, career, and workforce development;
- 2547 | (i) Business and operational services ~~staff development~~;
- 2548 | (j) Purchasing; or
- 2549 | (k) Planning and accountability.

2550 | (2) (a) Each regional consortium service organization that

2551 consists of four or more school districts is eligible to
2552 receive, through the Department of Education, subject to the
2553 funds provided in the General Appropriations Act, an allocation
2554 ~~incentive grant~~ of \$150,000 ~~\$50,000~~ per school district and
2555 eligible member to be used for the delivery of services within
2556 ~~the~~ participating school districts. The determination of
2557 services and use of such funds must ~~shall~~ be established by the
2558 board of directors of the regional consortium service
2559 organization. The funds must ~~shall~~ be distributed to each
2560 regional consortium service organization no later than 30 days
2561 following the release of the funds to the department. Each
2562 regional consortium service organization shall submit an annual
2563 report to the department regarding the use of funds for
2564 consortia services. Unexpended amounts in any fund in a
2565 consortium's current year operating budget must be carried
2566 forward and included as the balance forward for that fund in the
2567 approved operating budget for the following year. Each regional
2568 consortium service organization shall provide quarterly
2569 financial reports to member districts.

2570 (b) Member districts shall designate a district that will
2571 serve as a fiscal agent for contractual and reporting purposes.
2572 Such fiscal agent district is entitled to reasonable
2573 compensation for accounting and other services performed. The
2574 regional consortium service organization shall retain all funds
2575 received from grants or contracted services to cover indirect or

2576 administrative costs associated with the provision of such
2577 services. The regional consortium service organization board of
2578 directors shall determine the products and services to be
2579 provided by the consortium; however, in all contractual matters,
2580 the school board of the fiscal agent district shall act on
2581 proposed actions of the regional consortium service
2582 organization.

2583 (c) The regional consortium service organization board of
2584 directors shall recommend establishment of positions and
2585 individuals for appointment to the fiscal agent district.
2586 Personnel must be employed under the personnel policies of the
2587 fiscal agent district and are deemed to be public employees of
2588 the fiscal agent district. The regional consortium service
2589 organization board of directors may recommend a salary schedule
2590 and job descriptions specific to its personnel.

2591 (d) The regional consortium service organization may
2592 purchase or lease property and facilities essential for its
2593 operations and is responsible for their maintenance and
2594 associated overhead costs.

2595 (e) If a regional consortium service organization is
2596 dissolved, any revenue from the sale of assets must be
2597 distributed among the member districts as determined by the
2598 board of directors ~~Application for incentive grants shall be~~
2599 ~~made to the Commissioner of Education by July 30 of each year~~
2600 ~~for distribution to qualifying regional consortium service~~

2601 ~~organizations by January 1 of the fiscal year.~~

2602 (5) The board of directors of a regional consortium
 2603 service organization may use various means to generate revenue
 2604 in support of its activities, including, but not limited to,
 2605 contracting for services to nonmember districts. The board of
 2606 directors may acquire, enjoy, use, and dispose of patents,
 2607 copyrights, and trademarks and any licenses and associated ~~other~~
 2608 rights or interests ~~thereunder or therein~~. Ownership of all such
 2609 patents, copyrights, trademarks, licenses, and associated rights
 2610 or interests ~~thereunder or therein~~ shall vest in the state, with
 2611 the board of directors having full right of use and full right
 2612 to retain associated ~~the~~ revenues ~~derived therefrom~~. Any funds
 2613 realized from contracted services, patents, copyrights,
 2614 trademarks, or licenses are ~~shall be~~ considered internal funds
 2615 as provided in s. 1011.07. A fund balance must be established
 2616 for maintaining or expanding services, facilities maintenance,
 2617 terminal pay, and other liabilities ~~Such funds shall be used to~~
 2618 ~~support the organization's marketing and research and~~
 2619 ~~development activities in order to improve and increase services~~
 2620 ~~to its member districts.~~

2621 (6) A regional consortium service organization is
 2622 authorized to administer the Regional Consortia Service
 2623 Organization Supplemental Services Program under s. 1001.4511.

2624 **Section 37. Section 1001.4511, Florida Statutes, is**
 2625 **created to read:**

2626 1001.4511 Regional Consortia Service Organization
 2627 Supplemental Services Program.—

2628 (1) There is created the Regional Consortia Service
 2629 Organization Supplemental Services Program to increase the
 2630 ability of regional consortium service organizations under s.
 2631 1001.451 to provide programs and services to consortia members
 2632 through cooperative agreements. Program funds may be used to
 2633 supplement member needs related to transportation; district
 2634 finance personnel services; property insurance; cybersecurity
 2635 support; school safety; college, career, and workforce
 2636 development; academic support; and behavior support within
 2637 exceptional student education services.

2638 (2) Each regional consortium service organization shall
 2639 annually report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
 2640 of the House of Representatives the distribution of funds,
 2641 including members awarded and services provided.

2642 (3) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351,
 2643 funds allocated for this purpose which are not disbursed by June
 2644 30 of the fiscal year in which the funds are allocated may be
 2645 carried forward for up to 5 years after the effective date of
 2646 the original appropriation.

2647 **Section 38. Section 1009.635, Florida Statutes, is created**
 2648 **to read:**

2649 1009.635 Rural Incentive for Professional Educators.—

2650 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Rural Incentive for Professional

2651 Educators (RIPE) Program is established within the Department of
2652 Education to support the recruitment and retention of qualified
2653 instructional personnel in rural communities. The program shall
2654 provide financial assistance for the repayment of student loans
2655 for eligible participants who establish permanent residency and
2656 employment in rural areas of opportunity.

2657 (2) ELIGIBILITY.—An individual is eligible to participate
2658 in the RIPE Program if he or she does all of the following:

2659 (a) Establishes permanent residency on or after July 1,
2660 2025, in a rural area of opportunity as designated pursuant to
2661 s. 288.0656. The address on an individual's state-issued
2662 identification card or driver license is evidence of residence.

2663 (b) Secures full-time employment as a teacher or
2664 administrator in a private school as defined in s. 1002.01, or
2665 as instructional or administrative personnel as those terms are
2666 defined in s. 1012.01(2) and (3), respectively, in the public
2667 school district located within the same rural area of
2668 opportunity as he or she resides.

2669 (c) Holds an associate degree, bachelor's degree,
2670 postgraduate degree, or certificate from an accredited
2671 institution earned before establishing residency.

2672 (d) Has an active student loan balance incurred for the
2673 completion of the qualifying degree or certificate.

2674 (3) LOAN REPAYMENT.—Eligible participants may receive up
2675 to \$15,000 in total student loan repayment assistance over 5

2676 years, disbursed in annual payments not to exceed \$3,000 per
 2677 year. Payments shall be made directly to the lender servicing
 2678 the participant's student loan.

2679 (4) AWARD DISTRIBUTION.—Before disbursement of an award,
 2680 the department shall verify that the participant:

2681 (a) Has maintained continuous employment with the school
 2682 district in an instructional or administrative position;

2683 (b) Has received a rating of effective or highly effective
 2684 pursuant to s. 1012.34; and

2685 (c) Has not been placed on probation, had his or her
 2686 certificate suspended or revoked, or been placed on the
 2687 disqualification list, pursuant to s. 1012.796.

2688 (5) ADMINISTRATION.—The program shall be administered by
 2689 the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the Department
 2690 of Education, which shall:

2691 (a) Develop application procedures requiring
 2692 documentation, including proof of residency, verification of
 2693 employment, official academic transcripts, and details of
 2694 outstanding student loans.

2695 (b) Monitor compliance with program requirements.

2696 (6) RULEMAKING.—The State Board of Education shall adopt
 2697 rules no later than January 31, 2026, to administer this
 2698 section.

2699 **Section 39. Subsection (3) of section 1013.62, Florida**
 2700 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

2701 1013.62 Charter schools capital outlay funding.—
 2702 (3) If the school board levies the discretionary millage
 2703 authorized in s. 1011.71(2), the department must ~~shall~~ use the
 2704 following calculation methodology to determine the amount of
 2705 revenue that a school district must distribute to each eligible
 2706 charter school:

2707 (a) Reduce the total discretionary millage revenue by the
 2708 school district's annual debt service obligation incurred as of
 2709 March 1, 2017, which has not been subsequently retired, and:

2710 1. Beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, for any
 2711 district with an active project or an outstanding participation
 2712 requirement balance, any amount of participation requirement
 2713 pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)8. that is being satisfied by
 2714 revenues raised by the discretionary millage; or

2715 2. For construction projects for which Special Facilities
 2716 Construction Account funding is sought beginning in the 2025-
 2717 2026 fiscal year, the value of 1 mill from the revenue generated
 2718 pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)8.b.

2719 (b) Divide the school district's adjusted discretionary
 2720 millage revenue by the district's total capital outlay full-time
 2721 equivalent membership and the total number of full-time
 2722 equivalent students of each eligible charter school to determine
 2723 a capital outlay allocation per full-time equivalent student.

2724 (c) Multiply the capital outlay allocation per full-time
 2725 equivalent student by the total number of full-time equivalent

2726 students of each eligible charter school to determine the
2727 capital outlay allocation for each charter school.

2728 (d) If applicable, reduce the capital outlay allocation
2729 identified in paragraph (c) by the total amount of state funds
2730 allocated to each eligible charter school in subsection (2) to
2731 determine the maximum calculated capital outlay allocation. The
2732 amount of funds a school district must distribute to charter
2733 schools shall be as follows:

2734 1. For fiscal year 2023-2024, the amount is 20 percent of
2735 the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2736 2. For fiscal year 2024-2025, the amount is 40 percent of
2737 the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2738 3. For fiscal year 2025-2026, the amount is 60 percent of
2739 the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2740 4. For fiscal year 2026-2027, the amount is 80 percent of
2741 the amount calculated under this paragraph.

2742 5. For fiscal year 2027-2028, and each fiscal year
2743 thereafter, the amount is 100 percent of the amount calculated
2744 under this paragraph.

2745 (e) School districts shall distribute capital outlay funds
2746 to eligible charter schools no later than February 1 of each
2747 year, as required by this subsection, based on the amount of
2748 funds received by the district school board. School districts
2749 shall distribute any remaining capital outlay funds, as required
2750 by this subsection, upon the receipt of such funds until the

2751 total amount calculated pursuant to this subsection is
 2752 distributed.

2753
 2754 By October 1 of each year, each school district shall certify to
 2755 the department the amount of debt service that ~~and participation~~
 2756 ~~requirement that complies with the requirement of paragraph (a)~~
 2757 ~~and~~ can be reduced from the total discretionary millage revenue.
 2758 Each school district shall also certify the amount of the
 2759 participation requirement that complies with paragraph (a), or
 2760 certify the value of 1 mill from revenue generated pursuant to
 2761 s. 1013.64(2)(a)8.b. that can be reduced from the total
 2762 discretionary millage revenue, as applicable. The Auditor
 2763 General shall verify compliance with the requirements of
 2764 paragraph (a) and s. 1011.71(2)(e) during scheduled operational
 2765 audits of school districts.

2766 **Section 40. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section**
 2767 **1013.64, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

2768 1013.64 Funds for comprehensive educational plant needs;
 2769 construction cost maximums for school district capital
 2770 projects.—Allocations from the Public Education Capital Outlay
 2771 and Debt Service Trust Fund to the various boards for capital
 2772 outlay projects shall be determined as follows:

2773 (2)(a) The department shall establish, as a part of the
 2774 Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund, a
 2775 separate account, in an amount determined by the Legislature, to

2776 be known as the "Special Facility Construction Account." The
2777 Special Facility Construction Account shall be used to provide
2778 necessary construction funds to school districts which have
2779 urgent construction needs but which lack sufficient resources at
2780 present, and cannot reasonably anticipate sufficient resources
2781 within the period of the next 3 years, for these purposes from
2782 currently authorized sources of capital outlay revenue. A school
2783 district requesting funding from the Special Facility
2784 Construction Account shall submit one specific construction
2785 project, not to exceed one complete educational plant, to the
2786 Special Facility Construction Committee. A district may not
2787 receive funding for more than one approved project in any 3-year
2788 period ~~or while any portion of the district's participation~~
2789 ~~requirement is outstanding~~. The first year of the 3-year period
2790 shall be the first year a district receives an appropriation.
2791 The department shall encourage a construction program that
2792 reduces the average size of schools in the district. The request
2793 must meet the following criteria to be considered by the
2794 committee:

2795 1. The project must be deemed a critical need and must be
2796 recommended for funding by the Special Facility Construction
2797 Committee. Before developing construction plans for the proposed
2798 facility, the district school board must request a
2799 preapplication review by the Special Facility Construction
2800 Committee or a project review subcommittee convened by the chair

2801 of the committee to include two representatives of the
2802 department and two staff members from school districts not
2803 eligible to participate in the program. A school district may
2804 request a preapplication review at any time; however, if the
2805 district school board seeks inclusion in the department's next
2806 annual capital outlay legislative budget request, the
2807 preapplication review request must be made before February 1.
2808 Within 90 days after receiving the preapplication review
2809 request, the committee or subcommittee must meet in the school
2810 district to review the project proposal and existing facilities.
2811 To determine whether the proposed project is a critical need,
2812 the committee or subcommittee shall consider, at a minimum, the
2813 capacity of all existing facilities within the district as
2814 determined by the Florida Inventory of School Houses; the
2815 district's pattern of student growth; the district's existing
2816 and projected capital outlay full-time equivalent student
2817 enrollment as determined by the demographic, revenue, and
2818 education estimating conferences established in s. 216.136; the
2819 district's existing satisfactory student stations; the use of
2820 all existing district property and facilities; grade level
2821 configurations; and any other information that may affect the
2822 need for the proposed project.

2823 2. The construction project must be recommended in the
2824 most recent survey or survey amendment cooperatively prepared by
2825 the district and the department, and approved by the department

2826 | under the rules of the State Board of Education. If a district
 2827 | employs a consultant in the preparation of a survey or survey
 2828 | amendment, the consultant may not be employed by or receive
 2829 | compensation from a third party that designs or constructs a
 2830 | project recommended by the survey.

2831 | 3. The construction project must appear on the district's
 2832 | approved project priority list under the rules of the State
 2833 | Board of Education.

2834 | 4. The district must have selected and had approved a site
 2835 | for the construction project in compliance with s. 1013.36 and
 2836 | the rules of the State Board of Education.

2837 | 5. The district shall have developed a district school
 2838 | board adopted list of facilities that do not exceed the norm for
 2839 | net square feet occupancy requirements under the State
 2840 | Requirements for Educational Facilities, using all possible
 2841 | programmatic combinations for multiple use of space to obtain
 2842 | maximum daily use of all spaces within the facility under
 2843 | consideration.

2844 | 6. Upon construction, the total cost per student station,
 2845 | including change orders, must not exceed the cost per student
 2846 | station as provided in subsection (6) unless approved by the
 2847 | Special Facility Construction Committee. At the discretion of
 2848 | the committee, costs that exceed the cost per student station
 2849 | for special facilities may include legal and administrative
 2850 | fees, the cost of site improvements or related offsite

2851 improvements, the cost of complying with public shelter and
2852 hurricane hardening requirements, cost overruns created by a
2853 disaster as defined in s. 252.34(2), costs of security
2854 enhancements approved by the school safety specialist, and
2855 unforeseeable circumstances beyond the district's control.

2856 7. There shall be an agreement signed by the district
2857 school board stating that it will advertise for bids within 30
2858 days of receipt of its encumbrance authorization from the
2859 department.

2860 8.a.(I) For construction projects for which Special
2861 Facilities Construction Account funding is sought before the
2862 2019-2020 fiscal year, the district shall, at the time of the
2863 request and for a continuing period necessary to meet the
2864 district's participation requirement, levy the maximum millage
2865 against its nonexempt assessed property value as allowed in s.
2866 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from
2867 the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).

2868 (II) Beginning with construction projects for which
2869 Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought in the
2870 2019-2020 fiscal year, the district shall, for a minimum of 3
2871 years before submitting the request and for a continuing period
2872 necessary to meet its participation requirement, levy the
2873 maximum millage against the district's nonexempt assessed
2874 property value as authorized under s. 1011.71(2) or shall raise
2875 an equivalent amount of revenue from the school capital outlay

2876 surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).

2877 (III) Beginning with the 2025-2026 fiscal year, any
2878 district with an ~~a new or~~ active project or an outstanding
2879 participation requirement balance, funded under ~~the provisions~~
2880 ~~of~~ this subsection, shall be required to budget no more than the
2881 value of 1 mill per year to the project until the district's
2882 participation requirement relating to the local discretionary
2883 capital improvement millage or the equivalent amount of revenue
2884 from the school capital outlay surtax is satisfied.

2885 b. For construction projects for which Special Facilities
2886 Construction Account funding is sought beginning in the 2025-
2887 2026 fiscal year, the district shall, for a minimum of 3 years
2888 before submitting the request and for the initial year of the
2889 appropriation and the 2 years following the initial
2890 appropriation, levy the maximum millage against the district's
2891 nonexempt assessed property value as authorized under s.
2892 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from
2893 the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).
2894 The district is not required to budget the funds toward the
2895 project, but must use the funds as authorized pursuant to s.
2896 1011.71 or s. 212.055(6), as applicable.

2897 9. If a contract has not been signed 90 days after the
2898 advertising of bids, the funding for the specific project must
2899 ~~shall~~ revert to the Special Facility New Construction Account to
2900 be reallocated to other projects on the list. However, an

2901 additional 90 days may be granted by the commissioner.

2902 10. The department shall certify the inability of the
2903 district to fund the survey-recommended project over a
2904 continuous 3-year period using projected capital outlay revenue
2905 derived from s. 9(d), Art. XII of the State Constitution, as
2906 amended, paragraph (3)(a) of this section, and s. 1011.71(2).

2907 11.a. For projects funded before the 2025-2026 fiscal
2908 year, the district shall have on file with the department an
2909 adopted resolution acknowledging its commitment to satisfy its
2910 participation requirement, which is equivalent to all
2911 unencumbered and future revenue acquired from s. 9(d), Art. XII
2912 of the State Constitution, as amended, paragraph (3)(a) of this
2913 section, and s. 1011.71(2), in the year of the initial
2914 appropriation and for the 2 years immediately following the
2915 initial appropriation.

2916 b. For projects funded during the 2025-2026 fiscal year,
2917 and thereafter, the district shall have on file with the
2918 department an adopted resolution acknowledging its commitment to
2919 comply with the requirements of this paragraph.

2920 12. Phase I plans must be approved by the district school
2921 board as being in compliance with the building and life safety
2922 codes before June 1 of the year the application is made.

2923 **Section 41.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$1
2924 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
2925 appropriated to the Florida Small Business Development Center

2926 Network under s. 288.001, Florida Statutes, to expand services
2927 in rural communities. The funds shall be allocated to the Office
2928 of Rural Prosperity budget entity within the Department of
2929 Commerce in the Special Categories-SBDCN Rural Services specific
2930 appropriation category.

2931 **Section 42.** (1) For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums
2932 of \$1,827,591 in recurring funds and \$652,327 in nonrecurring
2933 funds are appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the
2934 Department of Commerce.

2935 (2) The recurring general revenue funds shall be allocated
2936 to the Office of Rural Prosperity budget entity in the following
2937 specific appropriations categories: \$1,585,823 in Salaries and
2938 Benefits, \$175,961 in Expenses, \$50,000 in Contracted Services,
2939 \$10,000 in Operating Capital Outlay, and \$5,807 in Transfer to
2940 the Department of Management Services/Statewide Human Resources
2941 Contract.

2942 (3) The nonrecurring general revenue funds shall be
2943 allocated to the Office of Rural Prosperity budget entity in the
2944 following specific appropriations categories: \$92,327 in
2945 Expenses and \$560,000 in Acquisition of Motor Vehicles.

2946 (4) The Department of Commerce is authorized to establish
2947 17.00 full-time equivalent positions with associated salary rate
2948 of 1,060,000 in the Office of Rural Prosperity for the purpose
2949 of implementing this act. The following specific positions,
2950 classifications, and pay plans are authorized: 1.00 Director of

2951 General Operation, Class Code 9327, Pay Grade 940; 15.00
 2952 Government Analyst II, Class Code 2225, Pay Grade 026; and 1.00
 2953 Administrative Assistant II, Class Code 0712, Pay Grade 018.

2954 **Section 43.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the recurring
 2955 sum of \$8 million from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated
 2956 to the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of
 2957 Commerce to implement the Renaissance Grants Program created by
 2958 s. 288.014, Florida Statutes. No funds may be used by the state
 2959 for administrative costs.

2960 **Section 44.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the recurring
 2961 sum of \$500,000 from the Grants and Donations Trust Fund is
 2962 appropriated to the Office of Rural Prosperity within the
 2963 Department of Commerce to implement the Public Infrastructure
 2964 Smart Technology Grant Program created by s. 288.0175, Florida
 2965 Statutes.

2966 **Section 45.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$4
 2967 million in nonrecurring funds and \$1 million in recurring funds
 2968 from the General Revenue Fund are appropriated to the Office of
 2969 Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement
 2970 the Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund under s.
 2971 288.065, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

2972 **Section 46.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$40
 2973 million in nonrecurring funds and \$5 million in recurring funds
 2974 from the General Revenue Fund are appropriated to the Office of
 2975 Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement

2976 the Rural Infrastructure Fund under s. 288.0655, Florida
 2977 Statutes, as amended by this act.

2978 **Section 47.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of
 2979 \$250,000 in recurring funds from the Grants and Donations Trust
 2980 Fund is appropriated to the Office of Rural Prosperity within
 2981 the Department of Commerce to implement s. 288.0657, Florida
 2982 Statutes, as amended by this act.

2983 **Section 48.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$30
 2984 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
 2985 appropriated to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to be
 2986 used to preserve affordable multifamily rental housing in rural
 2987 communities funded through United States Department of
 2988 Agriculture loans. The funds provided in this appropriation
 2989 shall be used to issue competitive requests for application for
 2990 the rehabilitation or acquisition of such properties to ensure
 2991 continued affordability. By October 1, 2026, the Florida Housing
 2992 Finance Corporation shall submit a report to the President of
 2993 the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on
 2994 projects funded pursuant to this section, which report must
 2995 include the number of units preserved and the financing
 2996 portfolio for each project.

2997 **Section 49.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25
 2998 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
 2999 appropriated to the Department of Health for the purpose of
 3000 implementing the Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care

3001 Grant Program created under s. 381.403, Florida Statutes. Grant
 3002 funds shall be awarded over a 5-year period. Notwithstanding s.
 3003 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s. 216.351, Florida
 3004 Statutes, the unexpended balance of funds appropriated pursuant
 3005 to this section which is not disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal
 3006 year in which funds are appropriated may be carried forward
 3007 through the 2033-2034 fiscal year.

3008 **Section 50.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$5
 3009 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
 3010 appropriated to the Department of Health for the purpose of
 3011 implementing the Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and
 3012 Education Grant Program under s. 381.9856, Florida Statutes.
 3013 Notwithstanding s. 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s.
 3014 216.351, Florida Statutes, the unexpended balance of funds
 3015 appropriated pursuant to this section which is not disbursed by
 3016 June 30 of the fiscal year in which funds are appropriated may
 3017 be carried forward through the 2029-2030 fiscal year.

3018 **Section 51.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25
 3019 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
 3020 appropriated in fixed capital outlay to the Department of Health
 3021 for the purpose of implementing the rural hospital capital
 3022 improvement grant program under s. 395.6061, Florida Statutes.

3023 **Section 52.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of
 3024 \$1,499,261 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund and
 3025 \$1,933,112 in recurring funds from the Medical Care Trust Fund

3026 are appropriated to the Agency for Health Care Administration to
3027 establish a Diagnosis-Related Grouping (DRG) reimbursement
3028 methodology for critical access hospitals, as defined in s.
3029 408.07, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of providing inpatient
3030 reimbursement to such a hospital in amounts comparable to the
3031 reimbursement the hospital would receive for inpatient services
3032 from the federal Medicare program. The 2025-2026 fiscal year
3033 General Appropriations Act shall establish the DRG reimbursement
3034 methodology for critical access hospital inpatient services as
3035 directed in s. 409.905(5)(c), Florida Statutes.

3036 **Section 53.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of
3037 \$4,840,182 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund and
3038 \$6,240,820 in recurring funds from the Medical Care Trust Fund
3039 are appropriated to the Agency for Health Care Administration to
3040 establish an Enhanced Ambulatory Patient Grouping (EAPG)
3041 reimbursement methodology for critical access hospitals, as
3042 defined in s. 408.07, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of
3043 providing outpatient reimbursement to such a hospital in amounts
3044 comparable to the reimbursement the hospital would receive for
3045 outpatient services from the federal Medicare program. The 2025-
3046 2026 fiscal year General Appropriations Act shall establish the
3047 EAPG reimbursement methodology for critical access hospital
3048 outpatient services as directed in s. 409.905(6)(b), Florida
3049 Statutes.

3050 **Section 54.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$3.6

3051 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
3052 appropriated to the Department of Education to implement s.
3053 1001.451, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

3054 **Section 55.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25
3055 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General
3056 Revenue Fund to the Department of Education to be distributed to
3057 regional consortium service organizations under s. 1001.451,
3058 Florida Statutes, in order to provide funds pursuant to s.
3059 1001.4511, Florida Statutes. These funds shall be allocated as
3060 follows: \$5,555,149 to the Heartland Educational Consortium;
3061 \$11,912,923 to the North East Florida Educational Consortium;
3062 and \$7,531,928 to the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium. The
3063 funds must be distributed to each regional consortium service
3064 organization no later than 30 days following the release of the
3065 funds to the department.

3066 **Section 56.** For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$7
3067 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
3068 appropriated to the Department of Education to implement the
3069 Rural Incentive for Professional Educators (RIPE) Program, s.
3070 1009.635, Florida Statutes, as created by this act.

3071 **Section 57. Subsection (3) of section 163.3187, Florida**
3072 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

3073 163.3187 Process for adoption of small scale comprehensive
3074 plan amendment.—

3075 (3) If the small scale development amendment involves a

3076 site within a rural area of opportunity as defined under s.
3077 288.0656 ~~s. 288.0656(2)(d)~~ for the duration of such designation,
3078 the acreage limit listed in subsection (1) shall be increased by
3079 100 percent. The local government approving the small scale plan
3080 amendment shall certify to the state land planning agency that
3081 the plan amendment furthers the economic objectives set forth in
3082 the executive order issued under s. 288.0656(7), and the
3083 property subject to the plan amendment shall undergo public
3084 review to ensure that all concurrency requirements and federal,
3085 state, and local environmental permit requirements are met.

3086 **Section 58. Section 212.205, Florida Statutes, is amended**
3087 **to read:**

3088 212.205 Sales tax distribution reporting.—By March 15 of
3089 each year, each person who received a distribution pursuant to
3090 s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. and c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b. and c.~~ in the
3091 preceding calendar year shall report to the Office of Economic
3092 and Demographic Research the following information:

3093 (1) An itemized accounting of all expenditures of the
3094 funds distributed in the preceding calendar year, including
3095 amounts spent on debt service.

3096 (2) A statement indicating what portion of the distributed
3097 funds have been pledged for debt service.

3098 (3) The original principal amount and current debt service
3099 schedule of any bonds or other borrowing for which the
3100 distributed funds have been pledged for debt service.

3101 **Section 59. Section 257.191, Florida Statutes, is amended**
 3102 **to read:**

3103 257.191 Construction grants.—The Division of Library and
 3104 Information Services may accept and administer library
 3105 construction moneys appropriated to it and shall allocate such
 3106 appropriation to municipal, county, and regional libraries in
 3107 the form of library construction grants on a matching basis. The
 3108 local matching portion shall be no less than the grant amount,
 3109 on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to the maximum grant amount,
 3110 unless the matching requirement is waived pursuant to s. 288.019
 3111 ~~by s. 288.06561~~. Initiation of a library construction project 12
 3112 months or less prior to the grant award under this section does
 3113 ~~shall~~ not affect the eligibility of an applicant to receive a
 3114 library construction grant. The division shall adopt rules for
 3115 the administration of library construction grants. For the
 3116 purposes of this section, s. 257.21 does not apply.

3117 **Section 60. Subsection (2) of section 257.193, Florida**
 3118 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

3119 257.193 Community Libraries in Caring Program.—
 3120 (2) The purpose of the Community Libraries in Caring
 3121 Program is to assist libraries in rural communities, as defined
 3122 in s. 288.0656(2) and subject to the provisions of s. 288.019 ~~s.~~
 3123 ~~288.06561~~, to strengthen their collections and services, improve
 3124 literacy in their communities, and improve the economic
 3125 viability of their communities.

3126 **Section 61. Subsection (17) of section 265.283, Florida**
 3127 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

3128 265.283 Definitions.—The following definitions shall apply
 3129 to ss. 265.281-265.703:

3130 (17) "Underserved arts community assistance program
 3131 grants" means grants used by qualified organizations under the
 3132 Rural Economic Development Initiative, pursuant to s. 288.0656
 3133 and subject to the provisions of s. 288.019 ~~ss. 288.0656 and~~
 3134 ~~288.06561~~, for the purpose of economic and organizational
 3135 development for underserved cultural organizations.

3136 **Section 62. Paragraphs (a) and (d) of subsection (3) of**
 3137 **section 288.11621, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

3138 288.11621 Spring training baseball franchises.—

3139 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—

3140 (a) A certified applicant may use funds provided under s.
 3141 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ only to:

3142 1. Serve the public purpose of acquiring, constructing,
 3143 reconstructing, or renovating a facility for a spring training
 3144 franchise.

3145 2. Pay or pledge for the payment of debt service on, or to
 3146 fund debt service reserve funds, arbitrage rebate obligations,
 3147 or other amounts payable with respect thereto, bonds issued for
 3148 the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or renovation of
 3149 such facility, or for the reimbursement of such costs or the
 3150 refinancing of bonds issued for such purposes.

3151 3. Assist in the relocation of a spring training franchise
 3152 from one unit of local government to another only if the
 3153 governing board of the current host local government by a
 3154 majority vote agrees to relocation.

3155 (d)1. All certified applicants must place unexpended state
 3156 funds received pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s.~~
 3157 ~~212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ in a trust fund or separate account for use
 3158 only as authorized in this section.

3159 2. A certified applicant may request that the Department
 3160 of Revenue suspend further distributions of state funds made
 3161 available under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.b. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.b.~~ for 12
 3162 months after expiration of an existing agreement with a spring
 3163 training franchise to provide the certified applicant with an
 3164 opportunity to enter into a new agreement with a spring training
 3165 franchise, at which time the distributions shall resume.

3166 3. The expenditure of state funds distributed to an
 3167 applicant certified before July 1, 2010, must begin within 48
 3168 months after the initial receipt of the state funds. In
 3169 addition, the construction of, or capital improvements to, a
 3170 spring training facility must be completed within 24 months
 3171 after the project's commencement.

3172 **Section 63. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) and paragraphs**
 3173 **(a), (c), and (d) of subsection (3) of section 288.11631,**
 3174 **Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

3175 288.11631 Retention of Major League Baseball spring

3176 training baseball franchises.—

3177 (2) CERTIFICATION PROCESS.—

3178 (c) Each applicant certified on or after July 1, 2013,
3179 shall enter into an agreement with the department which:

3180 1. Specifies the amount of the state incentive funding to
3181 be distributed. The amount of state incentive funding per
3182 certified applicant may not exceed \$20 million. However, if a
3183 certified applicant's facility is used by more than one spring
3184 training franchise, the maximum amount may not exceed \$50
3185 million, and the Department of Revenue shall make distributions
3186 to the applicant pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s.~~

3187 ~~212.20(6)(d)6.c.~~

3188 2. States the criteria that the certified applicant must
3189 meet in order to remain certified. These criteria must include a
3190 provision stating that the spring training franchise must
3191 reimburse the state for any funds received if the franchise does
3192 not comply with the terms of the contract. If bonds were issued
3193 to construct or renovate a facility for a spring training
3194 franchise, the required reimbursement must be equal to the total
3195 amount of state distributions expected to be paid from the date
3196 the franchise violates the agreement with the applicant through
3197 the final maturity of the bonds.

3198 3. States that the certified applicant is subject to
3199 decertification if the certified applicant fails to comply with
3200 this section or the agreement.

3201 4. States that the department may recover state incentive
3202 funds if the certified applicant is decertified.

3203 5. Specifies the information that the certified applicant
3204 must report to the department.

3205 6. Includes any provision deemed prudent by the
3206 department.

3207 (3) USE OF FUNDS.—

3208 (a) A certified applicant may use funds provided under s.
3209 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ only to:

3210 1. Serve the public purpose of constructing or renovating
3211 a facility for a spring training franchise.

3212 2. Pay or pledge for the payment of debt service on, or to
3213 fund debt service reserve funds, arbitrage rebate obligations,
3214 or other amounts payable with respect thereto, bonds issued for
3215 the construction or renovation of such facility, or for the
3216 reimbursement of such costs or the refinancing of bonds issued
3217 for such purposes.

3218 (c) The Department of Revenue may not distribute funds
3219 under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ until July 1,
3220 2016. Further, the Department of Revenue may not distribute
3221 funds to an applicant certified on or after July 1, 2013, until
3222 it receives notice from the department that:

3223 1. The certified applicant has encumbered funds under
3224 either subparagraph (a)1. or subparagraph (a)2.; and

3225 2. If applicable, any existing agreement with a spring

3226 training franchise for the use of a facility has expired.

3227 (d)1. All certified applicants shall place unexpended
 3228 state funds received pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s.~~
 3229 ~~212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ in a trust fund or separate account for use
 3230 only as authorized in this section.

3231 2. A certified applicant may request that the department
 3232 notify the Department of Revenue to suspend further
 3233 distributions of state funds made available under s.
 3234 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ for 12 months after
 3235 expiration of an existing agreement with a spring training
 3236 franchise to provide the certified applicant with an opportunity
 3237 to enter into a new agreement with a spring training franchise,
 3238 at which time the distributions shall resume.

3239 3. The expenditure of state funds distributed to an
 3240 applicant certified after July 1, 2013, must begin within 48
 3241 months after the initial receipt of the state funds. In
 3242 addition, the construction or renovation of a spring training
 3243 facility must be completed within 24 months after the project's
 3244 commencement.

3245 **Section 64. Subsection (1) of section 443.191, Florida**
 3246 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

3247 443.191 Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund;
 3248 establishment and control.—

3249 (1) There is established, as a separate trust fund apart
 3250 from all other public funds of this state, an Unemployment

3251 Compensation Trust Fund, which shall be administered by the
 3252 Department of Commerce exclusively for the purposes of this
 3253 chapter. The fund must consist of:

3254 (a) All contributions and reimbursements collected under
 3255 this chapter;

3256 (b) Interest earned on any moneys in the fund;

3257 (c) Any property or securities acquired through the use of
 3258 moneys belonging to the fund;

3259 (d) All earnings of these properties or securities;

3260 (e) All money credited to this state's account in the
 3261 federal Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund under 42 U.S.C. s.
 3262 1103;

3263 (f) All money collected for penalties imposed pursuant to
 3264 s. 443.151(6) (a);

3265 (g) Advances on the amount in the federal Unemployment
 3266 Compensation Trust Fund credited to the state under 42 U.S.C. s.
 3267 1321, as requested by the Governor or the Governor's designee;
 3268 and

3269 (h) All money deposited in this account as a distribution
 3270 pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.e. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~

3271
 3272 Except as otherwise provided in s. 443.1313(4), all moneys in
 3273 the fund must be mingled and undivided.

3274 **Section 65. Section 571.26, Florida Statutes, is amended**
 3275 **to read:**

3276 571.26 Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust
 3277 Fund.—There is hereby created the Florida Agricultural
 3278 Promotional Campaign Trust Fund within the Department of
 3279 Agriculture and Consumer Services to receive all moneys related
 3280 to the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign. Moneys
 3281 deposited in the trust fund shall be appropriated for the sole
 3282 purpose of implementing the Florida Agricultural Promotional
 3283 Campaign, except for money deposited in the trust fund pursuant
 3284 to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.h. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.h.~~, which shall be held
 3285 separately and used solely for the purposes identified in s.
 3286 571.265.

3287 **Section 66. Subsection (2) of section 571.265, Florida**
 3288 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

3289 571.265 Promotion of Florida thoroughbred breeding and of
 3290 thoroughbred racing at Florida thoroughbred tracks; distribution
 3291 of funds.—

3292 (2) Funds deposited into the Florida Agricultural
 3293 Promotional Campaign Trust Fund pursuant to s. 212.20(6)(d)7.f.
 3294 ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.f.~~ shall be used by the department to encourage
 3295 the agricultural activity of breeding thoroughbred racehorses in
 3296 this state and to enhance thoroughbred racing conducted at
 3297 thoroughbred tracks in this state as provided in this section.
 3298 If the funds made available under this section are not fully
 3299 used in any one fiscal year, any unused amounts shall be carried
 3300 forward in the trust fund into future fiscal years and made

3301 available for distribution as provided in this section.

3302 **Section 67.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3303 made by this act to section 20.60, Florida Statutes, in a
 3304 reference thereto, subsection (8) of section 288.9935, Florida
 3305 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3306 288.9935 Microfinance Guarantee Program.—

3307 (8) The department must, in the department's report
 3308 required under s. 20.60(10), include an annual report on the
 3309 program. The report must, at a minimum, provide:

3310 (a) A comprehensive description of the program, including
 3311 an evaluation of its application and guarantee activities,
 3312 recommendations for change, and identification of any other
 3313 state programs that overlap with the program;

3314 (b) An assessment of the current availability of and
 3315 access to credit for entrepreneurs and small businesses in this
 3316 state;

3317 (c) A summary of the financial and employment results of
 3318 the entrepreneurs and small businesses receiving loan
 3319 guarantees, including the number of full-time equivalent jobs
 3320 created as a result of the guaranteed loans and the amount of
 3321 wages paid to employees in the newly created jobs;

3322 (d) Industry data about the borrowers, including the six-
 3323 digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
 3324 code;

3325 (e) The name and location of lenders that receive loan

3326 | guarantees;

3327 | (f) The number of loan guarantee applications received;

3328 | (g) The number, duration, location, and amount of

3329 | guarantees made;

3330 | (h) The number and amount of guaranteed loans outstanding,

3331 | if any;

3332 | (i) The number and amount of guaranteed loans with

3333 | payments overdue, if any;

3334 | (j) The number and amount of guaranteed loans in default,

3335 | if any;

3336 | (k) The repayment history of the guaranteed loans made;

3337 | and

3338 | (l) An evaluation of the program's ability to meet the

3339 | financial performance measures and objectives specified in

3340 | subsection (3).

3341 | **Section 68.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment

3342 | made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a

3343 | reference thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section

3344 | 125.0104, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3345 | 125.0104 Tourist development tax; procedure for levying;

3346 | authorized uses; referendum; enforcement.—

3347 | (5) AUTHORIZED USES OF REVENUE.—

3348 | (c) A county located adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico or the

3349 | Atlantic Ocean, except a county that receives revenue from taxes

3350 | levied pursuant to s. 125.0108, which meets the following

3351 criteria may use up to 10 percent of the tax revenue received
 3352 pursuant to this section to reimburse expenses incurred in
 3353 providing public safety services, including emergency medical
 3354 services as defined in s. 401.107(3), and law enforcement
 3355 services, which are needed to address impacts related to
 3356 increased tourism and visitors to an area. However, if taxes
 3357 collected pursuant to this section are used to reimburse
 3358 emergency medical services or public safety services for tourism
 3359 or special events, the governing board of a county or
 3360 municipality may not use such taxes to supplant the normal
 3361 operating expenses of an emergency medical services department,
 3362 a fire department, a sheriff's office, or a police department.

3363 To receive reimbursement, the county must:

3364 1.a. Generate a minimum of \$10 million in annual proceeds
 3365 from any tax, or any combination of taxes, authorized to be
 3366 levied pursuant to this section;

3367 b. Have at least three municipalities; and

3368 c. Have an estimated population of less than 275,000,
 3369 according to the most recent population estimate prepared
 3370 pursuant to s. 186.901, excluding the inmate population; or

3371 2. Be a fiscally constrained county as described in s.
 3372 218.67(1).

3373
 3374 The board of county commissioners must by majority vote approve
 3375 reimbursement made pursuant to this paragraph upon receipt of a

3376 recommendation from the tourist development council.

3377 **Section 69.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3378 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
 3379 reference thereto, subsection (3) of section 193.624, Florida
 3380 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3381 193.624 Assessment of renewable energy source devices.—

3382 (3) This section applies to the installation of a
 3383 renewable energy source device installed on or after January 1,
 3384 2013, to new and existing residential real property. This
 3385 section applies to a renewable energy source device installed on
 3386 or after January 1, 2018, to all other real property, except
 3387 when installed as part of a project planned for a location in a
 3388 fiscally constrained county, as defined in s. 218.67(1), and for
 3389 which an application for a comprehensive plan amendment or
 3390 planned unit development zoning has been filed with the county
 3391 on or before December 31, 2017.

3392 **Section 70.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3393 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
 3394 reference thereto, subsection (2) of section 196.182, Florida
 3395 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3396 196.182 Exemption of renewable energy source devices.—

3397 (2) The exemption provided in this section does not apply
 3398 to a renewable energy source device that is installed as part of
 3399 a project planned for a location in a fiscally constrained
 3400 county, as defined in s. 218.67(1), and for which an application

3401 for a comprehensive plan amendment or planned unit development
 3402 zoning has been filed with the county on or before December 31,
 3403 2017.

3404 **Section 71.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3405 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
 3406 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.12, Florida
 3407 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3408 218.12 Appropriations to offset reductions in ad valorem
 3409 tax revenue in fiscally constrained counties.—

3410 (1) Beginning in fiscal year 2008-2009, the Legislature
 3411 shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem
 3412 tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as
 3413 defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the
 3414 implementation of revisions of Art. VII of the State
 3415 Constitution approved in the special election held on January
 3416 29, 2008. The moneys appropriated for this purpose shall be
 3417 distributed in January of each fiscal year among the fiscally
 3418 constrained counties based on each county's proportion of the
 3419 total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the
 3420 implementation of the revision.

3421 **Section 72.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3422 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
 3423 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.125, Florida
 3424 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3425 218.125 Offset for tax loss associated with certain

3426 constitutional amendments affecting fiscally constrained
 3427 counties.—

3428 (1) Beginning in the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the
 3429 Legislature shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in
 3430 ad valorem tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained
 3431 counties, as defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct
 3432 result of the implementation of revisions of ss. 3(f) and 4(b),
 3433 Art. VII of the State Constitution which were approved in the
 3434 general election held in November 2008. The moneys appropriated
 3435 for this purpose shall be distributed in January of each fiscal
 3436 year among the fiscally constrained counties based on each
 3437 county's proportion of the total reduction in ad valorem tax
 3438 revenue resulting from the implementation of the revisions.

3439 **Section 73.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3440 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
 3441 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.135, Florida
 3442 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3443 218.135 Offset for tax loss associated with reductions in
 3444 value of certain citrus fruit packing and processing equipment.—

3445 (1) For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Legislature shall
 3446 appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem tax
 3447 revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as defined
 3448 in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the
 3449 implementation of s. 193.4516. The moneys appropriated for this
 3450 purpose shall be distributed in January 2019 among the fiscally

3451 constrained counties based on each county's proportion of the
3452 total reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the
3453 implementation of s. 193.4516.

3454 **Section 74.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3455 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
3456 reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.136, Florida
3457 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3458 218.136 Offset for ad valorem revenue loss affecting
3459 fiscally constrained counties.—

3460 (1) Beginning in fiscal year 2025-2026, the Legislature
3461 shall appropriate moneys to offset the reductions in ad valorem
3462 tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties, as
3463 defined in s. 218.67(1), which occur as a direct result of the
3464 implementation of revisions of s. 6(a), Art. VII of the State
3465 Constitution approved in the November 2024 general election. The
3466 moneys appropriated for this purpose shall be distributed in
3467 January of each fiscal year among the fiscally constrained
3468 counties based on each county's proportion of the total
3469 reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the
3470 implementation of the revision of s. 6(a), Art. VII of the State
3471 Constitution.

3472 **Section 75.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3473 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
3474 reference thereto, paragraph (cc) of subsection (2) of section
3475 252.35, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3476 252.35 Emergency management powers; Division of Emergency
3477 Management.—

3478 (2) The division is responsible for carrying out the
3479 provisions of ss. 252.31-252.90. In performing its duties, the
3480 division shall:

3481 (cc) Prioritize technical assistance and training to
3482 fiscally constrained counties as defined in s. 218.67(1) on
3483 aspects of safety measures, preparedness, prevention, response,
3484 recovery, and mitigation relating to natural disasters and
3485 emergencies.

3486 **Section 76.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3487 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
3488 reference thereto, subsection (4) of section 288.102, Florida
3489 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3490 288.102 Supply Chain Innovation Grant Program.—

3491 (4) A minimum of a one-to-one match of nonstate resources,
3492 including local, federal, or private funds, to the state
3493 contribution is required. An award may not be made for a project
3494 that is receiving or using state funding from another state
3495 source or statutory program, including tax credits. The one-to-
3496 one match requirement is waived for a public entity located in a
3497 fiscally constrained county as defined in s. 218.67(1).

3498 **Section 77.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3499 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
3500 reference thereto, paragraph (g) of subsection (16) of section

3501 403.064, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3502 403.064 Reuse of reclaimed water.—

3503 (16) By November 1, 2021, domestic wastewater utilities
3504 that dispose of effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse water by
3505 surface water discharge shall submit to the department for
3506 review and approval a plan for eliminating nonbeneficial surface
3507 water discharge by January 1, 2032, subject to the requirements
3508 of this section. The plan must include the average gallons per
3509 day of effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse water that will no
3510 longer be discharged into surface waters and the date of such
3511 elimination, the average gallons per day of surface water
3512 discharge which will continue in accordance with the
3513 alternatives provided for in subparagraphs (a)2. and 3., and the
3514 level of treatment that the effluent, reclaimed water, or reuse
3515 water will receive before being discharged into a surface water
3516 by each alternative.

3517 (g) This subsection does not apply to any of the
3518 following:

3519 1. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is
3520 located in a fiscally constrained county as described in s.
3521 218.67(1).

3522 2. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is
3523 located in a municipality that is entirely within a rural area
3524 of opportunity as designated pursuant to s. 288.0656.

3525 3. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is

3526 | located in a municipality that has less than \$10 million in
3527 | total revenue, as determined by the municipality's most recent
3528 | annual financial report submitted to the Department of Financial
3529 | Services in accordance with s. 218.32.

3530 | 4. A domestic wastewater treatment facility that is
3531 | operated by an operator of a mobile home park as defined in s.
3532 | 723.003 and has a permitted capacity of less than 300,000
3533 | gallons per day.

3534 | **Section 78.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3535 | made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in
3536 | references thereto, subsections (2) and (3) of section 589.08,
3537 | Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

3538 | 589.08 Land acquisition restrictions.—

3539 | (2) The Florida Forest Service may receive, hold the
3540 | custody of, and exercise the control of any lands, and set aside
3541 | into a separate, distinct and inviolable fund, any proceeds
3542 | derived from the sales of the products of such lands, the use
3543 | thereof in any manner, or the sale of such lands save the 25
3544 | percent of the proceeds to be paid into the State School Fund as
3545 | provided by law. The Florida Forest Service may use and apply
3546 | such funds for the acquisition, use, custody, management,
3547 | development, or improvement of any lands vested in or subject to
3548 | the control of the Florida Forest Service. After full payment
3549 | has been made for the purchase of a state forest to the Federal
3550 | Government or other grantor, 15 percent of the gross receipts

3551 from a state forest shall be paid to the fiscally constrained
 3552 county or counties, as described in s. 218.67(1), in which it is
 3553 located in proportion to the acreage located in each county for
 3554 use by the county or counties for school purposes.

3555 (3) The Florida Forest Service shall pay 15 percent of the
 3556 gross receipts from the Goethe State Forest to each fiscally
 3557 constrained county, as described in s. 218.67(1), in which a
 3558 portion of the respective forest is located in proportion to the
 3559 forest acreage located in such county. The funds must be equally
 3560 divided between the board of county commissioners and the school
 3561 board of each fiscally constrained county.

3562 **Section 79.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3563 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
 3564 reference thereto, paragraph (f) of subsection (1) of section
 3565 1011.62, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3566 1011.62 Funds for operation of schools.—If the annual
 3567 allocation from the Florida Education Finance Program to each
 3568 district for operation of schools is not determined in the
 3569 annual appropriations act or the substantive bill implementing
 3570 the annual appropriations act, it shall be determined as
 3571 follows:

3572 (1) COMPUTATION OF THE BASIC AMOUNT TO BE INCLUDED FOR
 3573 OPERATION.—The following procedure shall be followed in
 3574 determining the annual allocation to each district for
 3575 operation:

3576 (f) *Small district factor.*—An additional value per full-
 3577 time equivalent student membership is provided to each school
 3578 district with a full-time equivalent student membership of fewer
 3579 than 20,000 full-time equivalent students which is in a fiscally
 3580 constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1). The amount of
 3581 the additional value shall be specified in the General
 3582 Appropriations Act.

3583 **Section 80.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3584 made by this act to sections 218.67 and 339.2818, Florida
 3585 Statutes, in references thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (6)
 3586 of section 403.0741, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3587 403.0741 Grease waste removal and disposal.—

3588 (6) REGULATION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—

3589 (c) Fiscally constrained counties as described in s.
 3590 218.67(1) and small counties as defined in s. 339.2818(2) may
 3591 opt out of the requirements of this section.

3592 **Section 81.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3593 made by this act to section 288.0656, Florida Statutes, in a
 3594 reference thereto, paragraph (e) of subsection (7) of section
 3595 163.3177, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3596 163.3177 Required and optional elements of comprehensive
 3597 plan; studies and surveys.—

3598 (7)

3599 (e) This subsection does not confer the status of rural
 3600 area of opportunity, or any of the rights or benefits derived

3601 from such status, on any land area not otherwise designated as
3602 such pursuant to s. 288.0656(7).

3603 **Section 82.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3604 made by this act to section 288.9961, Florida Statutes, in a
3605 reference thereto, paragraph (a) of subsection (7) of section
3606 288.9962, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3607 288.9962 Broadband Opportunity Program.—

3608 (7) (a) In evaluating grant applications and awarding
3609 grants, the office must give priority to applications that:

3610 1. Offer broadband Internet service to important community
3611 institutions, including, but not limited to, libraries,
3612 educational institutions, public safety facilities, and health
3613 care facilities;

3614 2. Facilitate the use of telemedicine and electronic
3615 health records;

3616 3. Serve economically distressed areas of this state, as
3617 measured by indices of unemployment, poverty, or population loss
3618 that are significantly greater than the statewide average;

3619 4. Provide for scalability to transmission speeds of at
3620 least 100 megabits per second download and 10 megabits per
3621 second upload;

3622 5. Include a component to actively promote the adoption of
3623 the newly available broadband Internet service in the community;

3624 6. Provide evidence of strong support for the project from
3625 citizens, government, businesses, and institutions in the

3626 | community;

3627 | 7. Provide access to broadband Internet service to the
3628 | greatest number of unserved households and businesses;

3629 | 8. Leverage greater amounts of funding for a project from
3630 | private sources; or

3631 | 9. Demonstrate consistency with the strategic plan adopted
3632 | under s. 288.9961.

3633 | **Section 83.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3634 | made by this act to section 319.32, Florida Statutes, in a
3635 | reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 215.211, Florida
3636 | Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3637 | 215.211 Service charge; elimination or reduction for
3638 | specified proceeds.—

3639 | (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 215.20(1) and
3640 | former s. 215.20(3), the service charge provided in s. 215.20(1)
3641 | and former s. 215.20(3), which is deducted from the proceeds of
3642 | the taxes distributed under ss. 206.606(1), 207.026,
3643 | 212.0501(6), and 319.32(5), shall be eliminated beginning July
3644 | 1, 2000.

3645 | **Section 84.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3646 | made by this act to section 339.68, Florida Statutes, in
3647 | references thereto, subsections (5) and (6) of section 339.66,
3648 | Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

3649 | 339.66 Upgrade of arterial highways with controlled access
3650 | facilities.—

3651 (5) Any existing applicable requirements relating to
 3652 department projects shall apply to projects undertaken by the
 3653 department pursuant to this section. The department shall take
 3654 into consideration the guidance and recommendations of any
 3655 previous studies or reports relevant to the projects authorized
 3656 by this section and ss. 339.67 and 339.68, including, but not
 3657 limited to, the task force reports prepared pursuant to chapter
 3658 2019-43, Laws of Florida.

3659 (6) Any existing applicable requirements relating to
 3660 turnpike projects apply to projects undertaken by the Turnpike
 3661 Enterprise pursuant to this section. The Turnpike Enterprise
 3662 shall take into consideration the guidance and recommendations
 3663 of any previous studies or reports relevant to the projects
 3664 authorized by this section and ss. 339.67 and 339.68, including,
 3665 but not limited to, the task force reports prepared pursuant to
 3666 chapter 2019-43, Laws of Florida, and with respect to any
 3667 extension of the Florida Turnpike from its northerly terminus in
 3668 Wildwood.

3669 **Section 85.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
 3670 made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in
 3671 references thereto, subsections (4) and (6) of section 420.9072,
 3672 Florida Statutes, are reenacted to read:

3673 420.9072 State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program.—
 3674 The State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program is created for
 3675 the purpose of providing funds to counties and eligible

3676 municipalities as an incentive for the creation of local housing
 3677 partnerships, to expand production of and preserve affordable
 3678 housing, to further the housing element of the local government
 3679 comprehensive plan specific to affordable housing, and to
 3680 increase housing-related employment.

3681 (4) Moneys in the Local Government Housing Trust Fund
 3682 shall be distributed by the corporation to each approved county
 3683 and eligible municipality within the county as provided in s.
 3684 420.9073. Distributions shall be allocated to the participating
 3685 county and to each eligible municipality within the county
 3686 according to an interlocal agreement between the county
 3687 governing authority and the governing body of the eligible
 3688 municipality or, if there is no interlocal agreement, according
 3689 to population. The portion for each eligible municipality is
 3690 computed by multiplying the total moneys earmarked for a county
 3691 by a fraction, the numerator of which is the population of the
 3692 eligible municipality and the denominator of which is the total
 3693 population of the county. The remaining revenues shall be
 3694 distributed to the governing body of the county.

3695 (6) The moneys that otherwise would be distributed
 3696 pursuant to s. 420.9073 to a local government that does not meet
 3697 the program's requirements for receipts of such distributions
 3698 shall remain in the Local Government Housing Trust Fund to be
 3699 administered by the corporation.

3700 **Section 86.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment

HB 1427

2025

3701 made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in a
3702 reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (7) of section
3703 420.9076, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3704 420.9076 Adoption of affordable housing incentive
3705 strategies; committees.—

3706 (7) The governing board of the county or the eligible
3707 municipality shall notify the corporation by certified mail of
3708 its adoption of an amendment of its local housing assistance
3709 plan to incorporate local housing incentive strategies. The
3710 notice must include a copy of the approved amended plan.

3711 (b) If a county fails to timely adopt an amended local
3712 housing assistance plan to incorporate local housing incentive
3713 strategies but an eligible municipality receiving a local
3714 housing distribution pursuant to an interlocal agreement within
3715 the county does timely adopt an amended local housing assistance
3716 plan to incorporate local housing incentive strategies, the
3717 corporation, after issuance of a notice of termination, shall
3718 thereafter distribute directly to the participating eligible
3719 municipality its share calculated in the manner provided in s.
3720 420.9073.

3721 **Section 87.** For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3722 made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in a
3723 reference thereto, subsection (2) of section 420.9079, Florida
3724 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3725 420.9079 Local Government Housing Trust Fund.—

3726 (2) The corporation shall administer the fund exclusively
3727 for the purpose of implementing the programs described in ss.
3728 420.907-420.9076 and this section. With the exception of
3729 monitoring the activities of counties and eligible
3730 municipalities to determine local compliance with program
3731 requirements, the corporation shall not receive appropriations
3732 from the fund for administrative or personnel costs. For the
3733 purpose of implementing the compliance monitoring provisions of
3734 s. 420.9075(9), the corporation may request a maximum of one-
3735 quarter of 1 percent of the annual appropriation per state
3736 fiscal year. When such funding is appropriated, the corporation
3737 shall deduct the amount appropriated prior to calculating the
3738 local housing distribution pursuant to ss. 420.9072 and
3739 420.9073.

3740 **Section 88.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.