

By Senator Sharief

35-00821-25

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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to the Historic Cemeteries Program;  
3       amending s. 267.21, F.S.; requiring local governments  
4       to approve applications from historic African-American  
5       cemeteries to change the land use category and zoning  
6       district of excess vacant land if the cemetery sells  
7       or enters into a contract to sell such land in order  
8       to provide for the cemetery's long-term maintenance  
9       and upkeep; providing an effective date.

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11       WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes the work done by  
12       the University of South Florida's Black Cemetery Network to  
13       reclaim black histories that have been underrepresented, to  
14       redress the exploitation and erasure of these African-American  
15       cemeteries due to urban redevelopment and land-use practices,  
16       and to restore dignity to these cemeteries and honor the  
17       deceased, and

18       WHEREAS, the Black Cemetery Network has identified and  
19       registered 35 sites in Florida, and

20       WHEREAS, the Legislature passed House Bill 49 during the  
21       2023 Regular Session and it was signed into law by the Governor  
22       on May 25, 2023, creating the Historic Cemeteries Program, and

23       WHEREAS, the Historic Cemeteries Program provides grants to  
24       eligible cemeteries for preservation efforts; however, some of  
25       these cemeteries have vacant land that could be sold to help  
26       fund the long-term maintenance and upkeep of such cemeteries,  
27       ensuring that the grants are used for the initial preservation  
28       efforts of these cemeteries, NOW, THEREFORE,  
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30 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

31  
32 Section 1. Present subsection (3) of section 267.21,  
33 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (4), and a new  
34 subsection (3) is added to that section, to read:

35 267.21 Historic Cemeteries Program.—

36 (3) If a historic African-American cemetery with excess  
37 vacant land sells or enters into a contract to sell such land  
38 for the express purpose of funding the cemetery's long-term  
39 maintenance and upkeep, the local government where such cemetery  
40 is located must approve an application to change the land use  
41 designation and zoning of such land to match the most permissive  
42 land use category and zoning district adjacent to the excess  
43 property.

44 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.