

COMMITTEE/SUBCOMMITTEE AMENDMENT

Bill No. CS/HB 299 (2026)

Amendment No.

COMMITTEE/SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION

ADOPTED	<u> </u> (Y/N)
ADOPTED AS AMENDED	<u> </u> (Y/N)
ADOPTED W/O OBJECTION	<u> </u> (Y/N)
FAILED TO ADOPT	<u> </u> (Y/N)
WITHDRAWN	<u> </u> (Y/N)
OTHER	<u> </u>

1 Committee/Subcommittee hearing bill: Commerce Committee
2 Representative Melo offered the following:

4 **Amendment (with title amendment)**

5 Remove everything after the enacting clause and insert:

6 **Section 1. Section 163.3249, Florida Statutes, is created**
7 **to read:**

8 163.3249 Blue ribbon projects.—

9 (1) PURPOSE AND INTENT.—The purpose of this section is to
10 balance the protection of important state resources such as the
11 natural environment and existing agricultural and silvicultural
12 uses with the need to provide longer-term, well-planned
13 communities and job opportunities for the state's future. It is
14 the intent of the Legislature to accomplish this goal by
15 incentivizing large landowners in this state to be good stewards
16 of the natural environment and existing agricultural and

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17 silvicultural land while at the same time promoting a more
18 sustainable pattern of development. The Legislature intends to
19 create blue ribbon projects, and to provide a mechanism by which
20 local governments shall implement those projects within their
21 boundaries, in order to promote the goals of preserving natural
22 areas, encouraging agricultural land uses and rural land
23 stewardship, protecting critical ecological systems, expanding
24 wildlife corridors, and providing more compact mixed-use
25 developments designed for long-term viability.

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

27 (a) "Applicant" means the owner of land on which a blue
28 ribbon project is proposed.

29 (b) "Blue ribbon plan" or "plan" means the plan required
30 by subsection (5).

31 (c) "Blue ribbon project" or "project" means a project
32 that meets the requirements of this section.

33 (d) "Blue ribbon project overlay" means an overlay
34 district approved by a local government in its comprehensive
35 plan that must adhere to the requirements of the adopted blue
36 ribbon plan.

37 (e) "Development area" means land that may be utilized for
38 residential, commercial, industrial, office, civic, and
39 institutional purposes and complies with the requirements of
40 paragraph (3)(c) and subsection (4).

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41 (f) "Missing middle housing" means a range of for-sale and
42 for-rent housing types, including, but not limited to, duplexes,
43 triplexes, townhomes, small multifamily buildings, and small
44 detached single-family homes, that fill the gap between larger
45 single-family homes and larger apartment buildings. Such housing
46 may be vertically and horizontally integrated.

47 (g) "New urban design" means a development design that
48 creates walkable, mixed-use places.

49 (h) "Reserve area" means land that is set aside for
50 environmental conservation, wildlife corridors, wetland and
51 wildlife mitigation, lakes, passive recreation, productive
52 agriculture and silviculture, conservation agreements granted to
53 the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to
54 s. 570.71, activities permitted by conservation easements
55 entered into with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
56 Services pursuant to s. 570.71, and uses of public benefit, and
57 complies with the requirements of paragraph (3) (b). Reserve
58 areas cannot contain golf courses, data centers, or solar farms.

59 (i) "Uses of public benefit" means uses including parks,
60 active recreation, stormwater management facilities, flood
61 control facilities, utility facilities, and reservoirs.

62 (3) MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS.—A property must meet all of the
63 following requirements to qualify as a blue ribbon project:

64 (a) The property must contain a minimum of 10,000 acres of
65 land which are contiguous, as defined in s. 163.3163(3) (a),

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which are owned by the same person or by entities owned or controlled by the same person, and a majority of which are not located within a municipality.

(b) At least 60 percent of the land contained in the project must be reserve area. Land contained in a conservation easement before July 1, 2026, does not qualify as reserve area for the purposes of meeting the 60 percent threshold. The reserve area must meet all of the following requirements:

1. If any property boundary is contiguous to state-owned environmental land or the Florida wildlife corridor, a portion of the project's reserve area must be located adjacent to a portion of the state-owned land or the Florida wildlife corridor, as applicable.

2. A minimum of 70 percent of the reserve area must be contiguous, as defined in s. 163.3163(3)(a).

3. Uses of public benefit cannot exceed 15 percent of the reserve area.

(c) Up to 40 percent of the land contained in the project may be development area. The development area must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Individual development areas within the project must be designed to enhance walkability and mobility and must include a mixture of land uses.

2. At least 10 percent of the development area must be allocated to nonresidential land use.

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91 3. A portion of the development area must be allocated to
92 uses intended to provide economic development within the area
93 where the property is located. The development area so allocated
94 must be in a location that is accessible to an interstate
95 interchange, a state road, an active rail line, or an airport or
96 other transportation facility.

97 4. The development area must have a dense, walkable,
98 mixed-use development pattern that includes new urban design.

99 5. Types of residential units within the development area
100 must be varied and include single-family, multifamily, and
101 attached and detached residential units.

102 (4) DEVELOPMENT AREA DENSITIES AND INTENSITIES.—

103 (a) A maximum residential density of 12 units per gross
104 acre, and a maximum nonresidential intensity of 85 percent
105 impervious surface ratio per gross acre, are permitted within
106 the development area, as measured in combination throughout all
107 phases of the project. A building that contains residential
108 units and nonresidential uses shall be considered residential.

109 (b) At least 20 percent of residential units within the
110 development area in each phase of the project must be a
111 combination of the following:

112 1. Housing that is affordable, as defined in s. 420.0004,
113 for natural persons or families who meet the extremely-low-
114 income, very-low-income, or low-income limits specified in s.
115 420.0004.

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116 2. Missing middle housing.

117 3. Housing that is affordable, as defined in s. 420.0004,
118 for persons eligible for the Florida Hometown Hero Program under
119 s. 420.5096.

120 (c) The development area must be developed in phases.

121 Development rights and mitigation of project impacts shall be
122 vested for 50 years. If the applicant achieves development as
123 defined in s. 380.04 of at least 50 percent of the development
124 area within 50 years after the project's date of initial public
125 dedication of infrastructure, the vested period must be extended
126 for an additional 25 years.

127 (5) BLUE RIBBON PLANS.—A blue ribbon project must have a
128 blue ribbon plan, which is the conceptual master plan for the
129 project. A blue ribbon plan must comply with the requirements of
130 subsections (3) and (4). Blue ribbon plans also must contain the
131 following documents:

132 (a) A long-term master development map that, at a minimum,
133 depicts the conceptual locations of:

134 1. Reserve area and development area throughout the
135 property;

136 2. Major planned transportation corridors, including
137 roads, multipurpose trails, and transit;

138 3. Proposed civic and school sites; and

139 4. Proposed utility sites.

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140 (b) A conceptual phasing plan depicting land uses within
141 reserve areas and development areas, densities and intensities
142 of development within development areas, public facility
143 mitigation for such development within each phase, and
144 approximate acreage of reserve area in each phase.

145 (c) A conceptual water supply plan and a conceptual
146 wastewater plan to show the project's compliance with s.
147 163.3180. The plans can allow water and wastewater supplies to
148 be provided in phases.

149 (d) A conceptual transportation and mobility plan to show
150 the project's compliance with s. 163.3180. The plans can allow
151 transportation facilities to be provided in phases.

152 (e) A conceptual parks and recreation plan to show the
153 project's compliance with s. 163.3180. The plans can allow parks
154 and recreational facilities to be provided in phases.

155 (f) A conceptual resource protection plan to show the
156 conservation of and, as appropriate, restoration and management
157 of, regionally significant natural resources within the reserve
158 area. The protection of regionally significant natural resources
159 within the reserve area is determined to be a net ecosystem
160 benefit.

161 (g) Development standards for each type of land use
162 proposed within the development area which is typically found in
163 a planned unit development as defined in s. 163.3202(5)(b).

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165 A blue ribbon plan must be based on a planning period longer
166 than the generally applicable planning period of the local
167 comprehensive plan and must specify the projected population
168 within the planning area during the chosen planning period. A
169 plan is not required to demonstrate need based on projected
170 population growth or any other basis. If under the plan a
171 project contributes land or funds or otherwise causes the
172 construction of public facilities pursuant to s. 163.3180, the
173 project must receive dollar-for-dollar credits against impact,
174 mobility, proportionate share, or other fee credits from the
175 local government for such facility improvements as required by
176 s. 163.3180. All park and recreational uses in the parks and
177 recreation plan required by paragraph (e) shall comply with the
178 achieved level of service based on the latest local government
179 impact fee study in place at the time of enactment of this
180 section.

181

182 A blue ribbon plan must provide that any easement granted to the
183 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to s.
184 570.71 for portions of the reserve area that will be reserved
185 for uses consistent with that section must be granted without
186 charge. The granting of the easement shall occur upon agreement
187 between the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and
188 the landowner regarding allowable uses of the easement interest.
189 If an easement or property is granted to any other state agency,

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190 water management district, or local government, the easement or
191 property shall be granted without charge.

192 (6) LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF BLUE RIBBON PLANS.-

193 (a) A landowner must apply to the local government for
194 approval of a blue ribbon plan. A plan that meets the
195 requirements of this section must be approved by the local
196 governing body during a public hearing. The local governing
197 body's review of a plan is limited to review for compliance with
198 this section. The local government's staff must review an
199 application for a blue ribbon plan in the same manner as it
200 reviews applications for rezonings. At any time during the local
201 government staff's review of the blue ribbon plan, the landowner
202 shall have the right to request that the application be placed
203 on the soonest-available agenda of the local governing body for
204 a public hearing. The local government must conduct two public
205 hearings related to a blue ribbon plan application, the first at
206 local government's land planning agency and the second at the
207 local government's commission or council, at which time a
208 decision on the application will be made by the commission or
209 council.

210 (b) The local government shall provide public notice of
211 the public hearings on the blue ribbon plan application in the
212 same manner as it provides notice for rezoning applications.

213 (c) Within 30 days of final approval of a blue ribbon
214 plan, a local government shall adopt the blue ribbon plan as a

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215 site-specific text amendment to its comprehensive plan and the
216 blue ribbon plan overlay shall be depicted on the comprehensive
217 plan future land use map. The text amendment shall govern use of
218 the property in lieu of applicable comprehensive plan future
219 land use requirements and applicable land development
220 regulations. The blue ribbon plan shall serve as the governing
221 document for the blue ribbon project overlay.

222 (d) A blue ribbon project may be located on land with any
223 future land use designation provided in the applicable local
224 government's comprehensive plan and with any zoning designation
225 listed in the applicable local government's land development
226 regulations.

227 (e) After a blue ribbon plan has been approved, the local
228 government must record the blue ribbon plan in the public
229 records of the county in which the property is located, and the
230 plan shall run with title to the land. The applicant may not
231 amend the recorded plan without undergoing review of the plan
232 amendment in accordance with paragraph (a). Review of a plan
233 amendment is limited to the portions of the plan which are being
234 revised.

235 (f) Applicants may hire private companies to conduct plan
236 reviews and building inspections pursuant to s. 553.791.

237 (7) APPEAL PROCEDURE.—

238 (a) The applicant may appeal the local government's denial
239 of an application for a blue ribbon project by filing a de novo

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240 action for declaratory, injunctive, or other relief requiring
241 the local government to approve the application if the applicant
242 demonstrates through competent and substantial evidence that its
243 application is compliant with this section. The local government
244 has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence
245 that the application is not in compliance with this section. The
246 court shall not use a deferential standard for the benefit of
247 the government. Before initiating such an action, the applicant
248 may use the dispute resolution procedures under s. 70.45.

249 (b) A local government's approval of a blue ribbon plan
250 may be appealed in the same manner as provided in s.
251 163.3184(5).

252 (8) ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.—A blue ribbon project must
253 comply with applicable provisions of chapters 373 and 403.

254 **Section 2.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

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257 -----
258 **T I T L E A M E N D M E N T**

259 Remove everything before the enacting clause and insert:
260 An act relating to blue ribbon projects; creating s.
261 163.3249, F.S.; providing a purpose and legislative
262 intent; defining terms; requiring that a development
263 project meet certain requirements to qualify as a blue
264 ribbon project; specifying maximum residential density

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265 and nonresidential intensity permitted within the
266 development area of a blue ribbon project; requiring
267 that a specified percentage of the project's
268 residential units meet certain requirements; requiring
269 the development of the development area in phases for
270 a specified purpose; providing that development rights
271 and mitigation of project impacts shall be vested for
272 at least a certain period, which may be extended under
273 certain circumstances; requiring that a blue ribbon
274 project have a blue ribbon plan; providing
275 requirements for such plan; specifying that a plan is
276 not required to demonstrate certain need; requiring
277 that a project receive dollar-for-dollar credits from
278 a local government under certain circumstances;
279 specifying that certain easements or property must be
280 granted without charge; specifying that a project may
281 be located on land with any future land use
282 designation or zoning designation; prohibiting the
283 required amendment of a comprehensive plan or a
284 required rezoning for approval of a project;
285 authorizing a landowner to apply to the local
286 government for approval of a project; requiring that a
287 project that meets certain requirements receive
288 administrative approval; limiting local government
289 review of a project; authorizing applicants to hire

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290 private companies to conduct plan reviews and building
291 inspections; requiring an applicant to publish notice
292 of an approved project in a specified manner;
293 requiring an applicant to record the plan for an
294 approved project in the public records of the county
295 in which the project property is located; prohibiting
296 an applicant from amending a recorded plan without
297 undergoing a specified review; providing appeal
298 procedures; providing requirements for environmental
299 review; providing an effective date.