

By the Committee on Fiscal Policy; and Senator Simon

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to rural communities; reenacting and amending s. 20.60, F.S.; revising the list of divisions and offices within the Department of Commerce to conform to changes made by the act; revising the annual program reports that must be included in the annual report of the Department of Commerce; amending s. 163.3168, F.S.; requiring the state land planning agency to give preference for technical assistance funding to local governments located in a rural area of opportunity; requiring the agency to consult with the Office of Rural Prosperity when awarding certain funding; amending s. 201.15, F.S.; requiring that a certain sum be paid to the credit of the State Transportation Trust Fund for the exclusive use of the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program; amending s. 202.18, F.S.; redirecting the transfer of certain communication services tax revenue; amending s. 212.20, F.S.; revising the distribution of sales and use tax revenue to include a transfer to fiscally constrained counties; amending s. 215.971, F.S.; providing construction regarding agreements funded with federal or state assistance; requiring the agency to expedite payment requests from a county, municipality, or rural area of opportunity for a specified purpose; requiring each state agency to report to the Office of Rural Prosperity by a certain date with a summary of certain information; requiring the office to summarize the

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information it receives for its annual report;
amending s. 218.67, F.S.; revising the conditions
required for a county to be considered a fiscally
constrained county; authorizing eligible counties to
receive a distribution of sales and use tax revenue;
revising the sources that the Department of Revenue
must use to determine the amount distributed to
fiscally constrained counties; revising the factors
for allocation of the distribution of revenue to
fiscally constrained counties; requiring that the
computation and amount distributed be calculated based
on a specified rounding algorithm; authorizing
specified uses for the revenue; conforming a cross-
reference; amending s. 288.0001, F.S.; requiring the
Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the
Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government
Accountability (OPPAGA) to prepare a report for a
specified purpose; specifying requirements for the
report; providing that the Office of Economic and
Demographic Research and OPPAGA must be provided with
all data necessary to complete the rural communities
or areas report upon request; authorizing the Office
of Economic and Demographic Research and OPPAGA to
collaborate on all data collection and analysis;
requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic
Research and OPPAGA to submit the report to the
Legislature by a specified date; providing additional
requirements for the report; providing for expiration;
amending s. 288.001, F.S.; requiring the Florida Small

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Business Development Center Network to use certain funds appropriated for a specified purpose; authorizing the network to dedicate funds to facilitate certain events; amending s. 288.007, F.S.; revising which local governments and economic development organizations seeking to recruit businesses are required to submit a specified report; creating s. 288.013, F.S.; providing legislative findings; creating the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce; requiring the Governor to appoint a director, subject to confirmation by the Senate; providing that the director reports to and serves at the pleasure of the secretary of the department; providing the duties of the office; requiring the office to establish by a specified date a certain number of regional rural community liaison centers across this state for a specified purpose; providing the powers, duties, and functions of the liaison centers; requiring the liaison centers, to the extent possible, to coordinate with certain entities; requiring the liaison centers to engage with the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI); requiring at least one staff member of a liaison center to attend the monthly meetings in person or by means of electronic communication; requiring the director of the office to submit an annual report to the Administration Commission in the Executive Office of the Governor; specifying requirements for the annual report; requiring that the

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annual report also be submitted to the Legislature by a specified date and published on the office's website; requiring the director of the office to attend the next Administration Commission meeting to present detailed information from the annual report; requiring OPPAGA to review the effectiveness of the office by a certain date annually until a specified date; requiring OPPAGA to review the office at specified intervals; requiring such reviews to include certain information to be considered by the Legislature; requiring that such reports be submitted to the Legislature; requiring OPPAGA to review certain strategies from other states; requiring OPPAGA to submit to the Legislature its findings at certain intervals; creating s. 288.014, F.S.; providing legislative findings; requiring the Office of Rural Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block grants to eligible communities; requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to certify to the Office of Rural Prosperity certain information by a specified date; defining the term "growth-impeded"; requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to certify annually that a county remains growth-impeded until such county has positive population growth for a specified amount of time; providing that such county, after 3 consecutive years of population growth, is eligible to participate in the program for 1 additional year; requiring a county eligible for the

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program to enter into an agreement with the Office of Rural Prosperity in order to receive the block grant; giving such counties broad authority to design their specific plans; prohibiting the Office of Rural Prosperity from determining how such counties implement the block grant; requiring regional rural community liaison center staff to provide assistance, upon request; requiring participating counties to report annually to the Office of Rural Prosperity with certain information; providing that a participating county receives a specified amount from funds appropriated to the program; requiring participating counties to make all attempts to limit the amount spent on administrative costs; authorizing participating counties to contribute other funds for block grant purposes; requiring participating counties to hire a renaissance coordinator; providing that funds from the block grant may be used to hire the renaissance coordinator; providing the responsibilities of the renaissance coordinator; requiring the regional rural community liaison center staff to provide assistance and training to the renaissance coordinator, upon request; requiring participating counties to design a plan to make targeted investments to achieve population growth and increase economic vitality; providing requirements for such plans; requiring participating counties to develop intergovernmental agreements with certain entities in order to implement the plan; requiring the

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Auditor General to conduct an operational audit every 2 years for a specified purpose; requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to provide an annual report on a specified date of renaissance block grant recipients by county; providing requirements for the annual report; requiring that the report be submitted to the Legislature; prohibiting funds appropriated for the program from being subject to reversion; providing for an expiration of the section; creating s. 288.0175, F.S.; creating the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program within the Office of Rural Prosperity; defining terms; requiring the office to contract with one or more smart technology lead organizations to administer a grant program for a specified purpose; providing the criteria for such contracts; requiring that projects funded by the grant program be included in the office's annual report; amending s. 288.018, F.S.; requiring the office, rather than the Department of Commerce, to establish a grant program to provide funding for regional economic development organizations; revising who may apply for such grants; providing that a grant award may not exceed a certain amount in a year; providing exceptions to a provision that the department may expend a certain amount for a certain purpose; amending s. 288.019, F.S.; revising the program criteria and procedures that agencies and organizations of REDI are required to review; revising the list of impacts each REDI agency and organization

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175 must consider in its review; requiring REDI agencies
176 and organizations to develop a proposal for
177 modifications which minimizes the financial and
178 resource impacts to a rural community; requiring that
179 ranking of evaluation criteria and scoring procedures
180 be used only when ranking is a component of the
181 program; requiring that match requirements be waived
182 or reduced for rural communities; providing that
183 donations of land may be treated as in-kind matches;
184 requiring each agency and organization that applies
185 for or receives federal funding to request federal
186 approval to waive or reduce the financial match
187 requirements, if any, for projects in rural
188 communities; requiring that proposals be submitted to
189 the office, rather than the department; requiring each
190 REDI agency and organization to modify rules or
191 policies as necessary to reflect the finalized
192 proposal; requiring that information about authorized
193 waivers be included on the office's online rural
194 resource directory; conforming a cross-reference;
195 amending s. 288.021, F.S.; requiring, when
196 practicable, the economic development liaison to serve
197 as the agency representative for REDI; amending s.
198 288.065, F.S.; defining the term "unit of local
199 government"; requiring the office to include in its
200 annual report certain information about the Rural
201 Community Development Revolving Loan Fund; conforming
202 provisions to changes made by the act; amending s.
203 288.0655, F.S.; revising the list of grants that may

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be awarded by the office; deleting the authorization for local match requirements to be waived for a catalyst site; revising the list of departments the office must consult with to certify applicants; requiring the office to include certain information about the Rural Infrastructure Trust Fund in its annual report; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 288.0656, F.S.; providing legislative findings; providing that REDI is created within the Office of Rural Prosperity, rather than the department; deleting the definitions of the terms "catalyst project" and "catalyst site"; requiring that an alternate for each designated deputy secretary be a deputy secretary or higher-level staff person; requiring that the names of such alternates be reported to the director of the office; requiring at least one rural liaison to participate in REDI meetings; requiring REDI to meet at least each month; deleting a provision that a rural area of opportunity may designate catalyst projects; requiring REDI to submit a certain report to the office, rather than to the department; specifying requirements for such report; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; repealing s. 288.06561, F.S., relating to reduction or waiver of financial match requirements; amending s. 288.0657, F.S.; requiring the office, rather than the department, to provide grants to assist rural communities; providing that such grants may be used for specified purposes; requiring the

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rural liaison to assist those applying for such grants; providing that marketing grants may include certain funding; amending s. 288.1226, F.S.; revising required components of the 4-year marketing plan of the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation; repealing s. 288.12266, F.S., relating to the Targeted Marketing Assistance Program; amending s. 288.9961, F.S.; revising the definition of the term "underserved"; requiring the office to consult with regional rural community liaison centers on development of a certain strategic plan; requiring rural liaisons to assist rural communities with providing feedback in applying for federal grants for broadband Internet services; requiring the office to submit reports with specified information to the Governor and the Legislature within certain timeframes; repealing s. 290.06561, F.S., relating to designation of rural enterprise zones as catalyst sites; amending s. 319.32, F.S.; revising the disposition of fees collected for certain title certificates; amending s. 334.044, F.S.; revising the powers and duties of the Department of Transportation; amending s. 339.0801, F.S.; revising the allocation of funds received in the State Transportation Trust Fund; amending s. 339.2816, F.S.; requiring, rather than authorizing, that certain funds received from the State Transportation Trust Fund be used for the Small County Road Assistance Program; requiring the department to use other additional revenues for the

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Small County Road Assistance Program; providing an exception from the prohibition against funding capacity improvements on county roads; amending s. 339.2817, F.S.; revising the criteria that the Department of Transportation must consider for evaluating projects for County Incentive Grant Program assistance; authorizing a county located either wholly or partially within the Everglades Agricultural Area to request a specified percent of project costs for eligible projects; amending s. 339.2818, F.S.; deleting a provision that the funds allocated under the Small County Outreach Program are in addition to the Small County Road Assistance Program; deleting a provision that a local government within the Everglades Agricultural Area, the Peace River Basin, or the Suwannee River Basin may compete for additional funding; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; making a technical change; amending s. 339.68, F.S.; providing legislative findings; creating the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program within the Department of Commerce; defining the term "rural community"; requiring the department to allocate from the State Transportation Trust Fund a minimum sum in each fiscal year to fund the program; providing that such funding is in addition to any other funding provided to the program; providing criteria the department must use to prioritize projects for funding under the program; requiring the department to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by a

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specified date; requiring that such report be submitted every 2 years thereafter; providing the criteria for such report; requiring the Department of Transportation to allocate additional funds to implement the Small County Road Assistance Program and amend the tentative work program for a specified number of fiscal years; requiring the department to submit a budget amendment before the adoption of the work program; requiring the department to allocate sufficient funds to implement the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program; requiring the department to amend the current tentative work program for a specified number of fiscal years to include the program's projects; requiring the department to submit a budget amendment before the implementation of the program; requiring that the revenue increases in the State Transportation Trust Fund which are derived from the act be used to fund the work program; amending s. 381.402, F.S.; revising eligibility requirements for the Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical Education Program; revising the proof required to make payments for participation in the program; creating s. 381.403, F.S.; providing legislative findings; creating the Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant Program within the Department of Health for a specified purpose; defining terms; requiring the department to award grants under the program to physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous advanced practice registered nurses intending to open

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new practices or practice locations in qualifying rural areas; specifying eligibility criteria for the grants; requiring the department, by a specified date, to create an application process for applying for grants under the program; specifying requirements for the application and application process; authorizing the department, subject to specific appropriation, to award grants under the program; specifying limitations on the awarding of grants; specifying expenses for which grant funds are authorized and prohibited; requiring the department to enter into a contract with each grant recipient; specifying requirements for the contracts; authorizing the department to adopt rules; requiring the department, beginning on a specified date and annually thereafter, to provide a report containing specified information to the Governor and the Legislature; providing for future legislative review and repeal of the program; creating s. 381.9856, F.S.; creating the Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and Education Grant Program within the Department of Health; specifying the purpose of the program; defining terms; requiring the department to award grants under the program to certain entities meeting specified criteria; requiring the department to give priority to certain applicants; limiting individual grants to a specified amount per year; requiring grant recipients to submit quarterly reports to the department; requiring the department to monitor program implementation and outcomes; requiring the

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department to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; authorizing the department to adopt rules; providing construction; providing for future legislative review and repeal of the program; amending s. 395.6061, F.S.; providing that rural hospital capital grant improvement program funding may be awarded to rural hospitals to establish mobile care units and telehealth kiosks for specified purposes; defining terms; amending s. 420.9073, F.S.; revising the calculation of guaranteed amounts distributed from the Local Government Housing Trust Fund; reenacting and amending s. 420.9075, F.S.; authorizing a certain percentage of the funds made available in each county and eligible municipality from the local housing distribution to be used to preserve multifamily affordable rental housing; specifying what such funds may be used for; providing an expiration; amending s. 1001.451, F.S.; revising the services required to be provided by regional consortium service organizations when such services are found to be necessary and appropriate by such organizations' boards of directors; revising the allocation that certain regional consortium service organizations are eligible to receive from the General Appropriations Act; requiring each regional consortium service organization to submit an annual report to the Department of Education; requiring that unexpended amounts in certain funds be carried forward; requiring each regional consortium service organization to

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provide quarterly financial reports to member districts; requiring member districts to designate a district to serve as a fiscal agent for certain purposes; providing for compensation of the fiscal agent district; requiring regional consortium service organizations to retain all funds received from grants or contracted services to cover indirect or administrative costs associated with the provision of such services; requiring the regional consortium service organization board of directors to determine products and services provided by the organization; requiring a regional consortium service organization board of directors to recommend the establishment of positions and appointments to a fiscal agent district; requiring that personnel be employed under specified personnel policies; authorizing the regional consortium service organization board of directors to recommend a salary schedule for personnel; authorizing regional consortium service organizations to purchase or lease property and facilities essential to their operations; providing for the distribution of revenue if a regional consortium service organization is dissolved; deleting a provision requiring applications for incentive grants; authorizing regional consortium service organization boards of directors to contract to provide services to nonmember districts; requiring that a fund balance be established for specified purposes; deleting a requirement for the use of certain funds; authorizing a regional consortium

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service organization to administer a specified program; creating s. 1001.4511, F.S.; creating the Regional Consortia Service Organization Supplemental Services Program; providing the purpose of the program; authorizing funds to be used for specified purposes; requiring each regional consortium service organization to report the distribution of funds annually to the Legislature; providing for the carryforward of funds; providing appropriations; creating s. 1009.635, F.S.; establishing the Rural Incentive for Professional Educators Program within the Department of Education; requiring the program to provide financial assistance for the repayment of student loans to eligible participants who establish permanent residency and employment in rural communities; providing that eligible participants may receive up to a certain amount in total student loan repayment assistance over a certain timeframe; requiring the department to verify certain information of participants in the program before it disburses awards; providing that the program is administered through the Office of Student Financial Assistance within the department; requiring the department to develop procedures and monitor compliance; requiring the State Board of Education to adopt rules by a certain date; amending s. 1013.62, F.S.; revising the calculation methodology to determine the amount of revenue that a school district must distribute to each eligible charter school; amending s. 1013.64, F.S.;

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revising conditions under which a school district may receive funding on an approved construction project; providing appropriations for specified purposes; amending ss. 163.3187, 212.205, 257.191, 257.193, 265.283, 288.11621, 288.11631, 443.191, 571.26, and 571.265, F.S.; conforming cross-references and provisions to changes made by the act; reenacting s. 288.9935(8), F.S., relating to the Microfinance Guarantee Program, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 20.60, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting ss. 125.0104(5)(c), 193.624(3), 196.182(2), 218.12(1), 218.125(1), 218.135(1), 218.136(1), 252.35(2)(cc), 288.102(4), 403.064(16)(g), 589.08(2) and (3), and 1011.62(1)(f), F.S., relating to authorized uses of tourist development tax; applicability of assessments of renewable energy source devices; application of exemptions of renewable energy source devices; appropriations to offset reductions in ad valorem tax revenue in fiscally constrained counties; offset for tax loss associated with certain constitutional amendments affecting fiscally constrained counties; offset for tax loss associated with reductions in value of certain citrus fruit packing and processing equipment; offset for ad valorem revenue loss affecting fiscally constrained counties; Division of Emergency Management powers; one-to-one match requirement under the Supply Chain Innovation Grant Program; applicability of provisions related to reuse of reclaimed water; land acquisition restrictions; and

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funds for operation of schools, respectively, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 218.67, F.S., in references thereto; reenacting s. 403.0741(6)(c), F.S., relating to grease waste removal and disposal, to incorporate the amendments made to ss. 218.67 and 339.2818, F.S., in references thereto; reenacting s. 163.3177(7)(e), F.S., relating to required and optional elements of comprehensive plans and studies and surveys, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 288.0656, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s. 288.9962(7)(a), F.S., relating to the Broadband Opportunity Program, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 288.9961, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s. 215.211(1), F.S., relating to service charges and elimination or reduction for specified proceeds, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 319.32, F.S., in a reference thereto; reenacting s. 339.66(5) and (6), F.S., relating to upgrades of arterial highways with controlled access facilities, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 339.68, F.S., in references thereto; reenacting ss. 420.9072(4) and (6), 420.9076(7)(b), and 420.9079(2), F.S., relating to the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program, adoption of affordable housing incentive strategies and committees, and the Local Government Housing Trust Fund, respectively, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 420.9073, F.S., in references thereto; providing an effective date.

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

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

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

(3)(a) The following divisions and offices of the 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. The Office of Economic Accountability and Transparency,

which shall:

a. Oversee the department's critical objectives as determined by the secretary and make sure that the department's key objectives are clearly communicated to the public.

b. Organize department resources, expertise, data, and research to focus on and solve the complex economic challenges facing the state.

c. Provide leadership for the department's priority issues that require integration of policy, management, and critical objectives from multiple programs and organizations internal and external to the department; and organize and manage external communication on such priority issues.

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

e. Promote strategic planning for the department.

(5) The divisions within the department have specific responsibilities to achieve the duties, responsibilities, and goals of the department. Specifically:

(a) The Division of Economic Development shall:

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

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

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

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plan for contracts entered into for delivery of programs authorized by this section.

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

a. Strategies for the promotion of business formation, expansion, recruitment, and retention through aggressive marketing, attraction of venture capital and finance development, domestic trade, international development, and export assistance, which lead to more and better jobs and higher wages for all geographic regions, disadvantaged communities, and populations of the state, including rural areas, minority businesses, and urban core areas.

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

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

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

e. Plans for the generation of foreign investment in the state which create jobs paying above-average wages and which result in reverse investment in the state, including programs that establish viable overseas markets, assist in meeting the financing requirements of export-ready firms, broaden opportunities for international joint venture relationships, use the resources of academic and other institutions, coordinate

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trade assistance and facilitation services, and facilitate availability of and access to education and training programs that assure requisite skills and competencies necessary to compete successfully in the global marketplace.

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

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

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

5. Update the strategic plan every 5 years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

163.3168 Planning innovations and technical assistance.—

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

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

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201.15 Distribution of taxes collected.—All taxes collected under this chapter are hereby pledged and shall be first made available to make payments when due on bonds issued pursuant to s. 215.618 or s. 215.619, or any other bonds authorized to be issued on a parity basis with such bonds. Such pledge and availability for the payment of these bonds shall have priority over any requirement for the costs of collection and enforcement under this section. Before distribution pursuant to this section, the Department of Revenue shall deduct amounts necessary to pay the costs of the collection and enforcement of the tax levied by this chapter. The costs may not be levied against any portion of taxes pledged to debt service on bonds to the extent that the costs are required to pay any amounts relating to the bonds. All of the costs of the collection and enforcement of the tax levied by this chapter shall be available and transferred to the extent necessary to pay debt service and any other amounts payable with respect to bonds authorized before January 1, 2017, secured by revenues distributed pursuant to this section. All taxes remaining after deduction of costs shall be distributed as follows:

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

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remainder shall be distributed as follows:

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

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

202.18 Allocation and disposition of tax proceeds.—The proceeds of the communications services taxes remitted under this chapter shall be treated as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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distributed accordingly.

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

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

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

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

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fiscally constrained counties pursuant to s. 218.67.

7. Of the remaining proceeds:

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

b. The department shall distribute \$166,667 monthly to each applicant certified as a facility for a new or retained professional sports franchise pursuant to s. 288.1162. Up to \$41,667 shall be distributed monthly by the department to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11621 for a facility

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for a spring training franchise. However, not more than \$416,670 may be distributed monthly in the aggregate to all certified applicants for facilities for spring training franchises. Distributions begin 60 days after such certification and continue for not more than 30 years, except as otherwise provided in s. 288.11621. A certified applicant identified in this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in distributions than expended by the applicant for the public purposes provided in s. 288.1162(5) or s. 288.11621(3).

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

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

e.(I) On or before July 25, 2021, August 25, 2021, and September 25, 2021, the department shall distribute \$324,533,334 in each of those months to the Unemployment Compensation Trust

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Fund, less an adjustment for refunds issued from the General Revenue Fund pursuant to s. 443.131(3)(e)3. before making the distribution. The adjustments made by the department to the total distributions shall be equal to the total refunds made pursuant to s. 443.131(3)(e)3. If the amount of refunds to be subtracted from any single distribution exceeds the distribution, the department may not make that distribution and must subtract the remaining balance from the next distribution.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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215.971 Agreements funded with federal or state assistance.—

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

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

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provisions of federal or state law, rule, or other regulation.

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

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

218.67 Distribution for fiscally constrained counties.—

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

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

(3) The amount to be distributed to each fiscally constrained county shall be determined by the Department of Revenue at the beginning of the fiscal year, using the prior fiscal year's sales and use tax collections from the most recent fiscal year that reports 12 months of collections ~~July 1 taxable~~

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value ~~certified pursuant to s. 1011.62(4)(a)1.a., tax data,~~
population as defined in s. 218.21, and the most current
calendar year per capita personal income published by the Bureau
of Economic Analysis of the United States Department of Commerce
~~millage rate levied for the prior fiscal year.~~ The amount
distributed shall be allocated based upon the following factors:

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

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

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

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

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

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purposes:

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

2. Thirty percent for infrastructure needs.

3. Twenty percent for any public purpose.

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

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

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

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

1. A review of definitions in the Florida Statutes of terms such as "rural community," "rural area of opportunity," and other similar terms used to define rural areas of this state,

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including population-based references, to assess the adequacy of the current statutory framework in defining these areas. The analysis must include, but need not be limited to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(d) This subsection expires July 1, 2026.

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

288.001 The Florida Small Business Development Center Network.—

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

(d) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a), (b), and (c), the network shall use funds directly appropriated for the specific purpose of expanding service in rural communities, as defined in s. 288.0656, in addition to any funds allocated by the network from other sources. The network shall use the funds to develop an activity plan focused on network consultants and resources in rural communities. In collaboration with regional economic

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development organizations as defined in s. 288.018, the plan must provide for either full- or part-time consultants to be available for at least 20 hours per week in rural areas or be permanently stationed in rural areas. This may include establishing a circuit in specific rural locations to ensure the consultants' availability on a regular basis. By using the funds to create a regular presence in rural areas, the network can strengthen community collaboration, raise awareness of available resources to provide opportunities for new business development or existing business growth, and make professional experience, education, and business information available in these essential communities. The network may dedicate funds to facilitate local or regional events that focus on small business topics, provide consulting services, and leverage partner organizations, such as the regional economic development organizations, local workforce development boards as described in s. 445.07, and Florida College System institutions.

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

288.007 Inventory of communities seeking to recruit businesses.—By September 30 of each year, a county or municipality that has a population of at least 25,000 or its local economic development organization, and each local government within a rural area of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656 or its local economic development organization, shall ~~must~~ submit to the department a brief overview of the strengths, services, and economic development incentives that its community offers. The local government or its local economic development organization also shall ~~must~~ identify any industries that it is

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1074 encouraging to locate or relocate to its area. Unless otherwise
1075 required pursuant to this section, a county or municipality
1076 having a population of 25,000 or less ~~fewer~~ or its local
1077 economic development organization seeking to recruit businesses
1078 may submit information as required in this section and may
1079 participate in any activity or initiative resulting from the
1080 collection, analysis, and reporting of the information to the
1081 department pursuant to this section.

1082 Section 11. Section 288.013, Florida Statutes, is created
1083 to read:

1084 288.013 Office of Rural Prosperity.—

1085 (1) The Legislature finds that the unique characteristics
1086 and nature of the rural communities in this state are integral
1087 to making this state an attractive place to visit, work, and
1088 live. Further, the Legislature finds that building a prosperous
1089 rural economy and vibrant rural communities is in the best
1090 interest of this state. Rural prosperity is integral to
1091 supporting this state's infrastructure, housing, and
1092 agricultural and food-processing needs, as well as promoting the
1093 health and advancement of the overall economy of this state. It
1094 is of importance to the state that its rural areas are able to
1095 grow, whether locally or in regional partnerships. To better
1096 serve rural communities, and in recognition of rural Florida's
1097 unique challenges and opportunities, the Office of Rural
1098 Prosperity is established to ensure these efforts are
1099 coordinated, focused, and effective.

1100 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity is created within the
1101 Department of Commerce for the purpose of supporting rural
1102 communities by helping rural stakeholders navigate available

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programs and resources and representing rural interests across state government.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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1132 (d) Create and maintain an online rural resource directory
1133 to serve as an interactive tool to navigate the various state
1134 and federal resources, tools, and services available to rural
1135 local governments. The office shall regularly maintain the
1136 resource directory and, to the greatest extent possible, include
1137 up-to-date information on state and federal programs, resources,
1138 tools, and services that address the needs of rural communities
1139 in all areas of governance. Each state agency shall routinely
1140 provide information and updates to the office for maintenance of
1141 the resource directory. The resource directory must allow users
1142 to search by indicators, such as agency name, resource type, or
1143 topic, and include a notification function to allow users to
1144 receive alerts when new or modified resources are available. To
1145 the greatest extent possible, the resource directory must
1146 include information on financial match requirements for the
1147 state and federal programs listed in the directory.

1148 (5) (a) By October 1, 2025, the office shall establish and
1149 staff seven regional rural community liaison centers across this
1150 state for the purpose of providing specialized in-person state
1151 support to local governments in rural areas of opportunity as
1152 defined in s. 288.0656. The department shall by rule divide this
1153 state into seven regions and assign a regional rural community
1154 liaison center to each region. Each liaison center shall support
1155 the local governments within its geographic territory and shall
1156 be staffed with at least two full-time department personnel. At
1157 a minimum, liaison centers shall have the following powers,
1158 duties, and functions:

1159 1. Work with local governments to plan and achieve goals
1160 for local or regional growth, economic development, and rural

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1161 prosperity.

1162 2. Facilitate local government access to state and federal
1163 resources, such as grants, loans, and other aid or resources.

1164 3. Advise local governments on available waivers of program
1165 requirements, including financial match waivers or reductions,
1166 for projects using state or federal funds through the Rural
1167 Economic Development Initiative under s. 288.0656.

1168 4. Coordinate local government technical assistance needs
1169 with the department and other state or federal agencies.

1170 5. Promote model ordinances, policies, and strategies
1171 related to economic development.

1172 6. Assist local governments with regulatory and reporting
1173 compliance.

1174 (b) To the greatest extent possible, the regional rural
1175 community liaison centers shall coordinate with local and
1176 regional governmental entities, regional economic development
1177 organizations as defined in s. 288.018, and other appropriate
1178 entities to establish a network to foster community-driven
1179 solutions that promote viable and sustainable rural communities.

1180 (c) The regional rural community liaison centers shall
1181 regularly engage with the Rural Economic Development Initiative
1182 established in s. 288.0656, and at least one staff member from
1183 each liaison center shall attend, either in person or by means
1184 of electronic communication, the monthly meetings required by s.
1185 288.0656(6)(c).

1186 (6) By December 1, 2025, and each year thereafter, the
1187 director of the office shall submit to the Administration
1188 Commission in the Executive Office of the Governor a written
1189 report describing the office's operations and accomplishments

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1190 for the preceding year, inclusive of the Rural Economic
1191 Development Initiative report required by s. 288.0656(8). In
1192 consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
1193 Services, the office shall also include in the annual report
1194 recommendations for policies, programs, and funding to further
1195 support the needs of rural communities in this state. The office
1196 shall submit the annual report to the President of the Senate
1197 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of
1198 each year and publish the annual report on the office's website.
1199 The director shall present, in person at the next scheduled
1200 Administration Commission meeting, detailed information from the
1201 annual report required by this subsection.

1202 (7) (a) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government
1203 Accountability (OPPAGA) shall review the effectiveness of the
1204 office by December 15, 2026, and each year thereafter until
1205 2028. Beginning in 2029, OPPAGA shall review and evaluate the
1206 office every 3 years and shall submit a report based on its
1207 findings. Each report must recommend policy and statutory
1208 modifications for consideration by the Legislature. OPPAGA shall
1209 submit each report to the President of the Senate and the
1210 Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to the
1211 schedule.

1212 (b) OPPAGA shall review strategies implemented by other
1213 states on rural community preservation, enhancement, and
1214 revitalization and report on their effectiveness and potential
1215 for implementation in this state. OPPAGA shall include its
1216 findings in its report to the President of the Senate and the
1217 Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2027,
1218 and every 3 years thereafter.

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1219 (c)1. OPPAGA shall review each state-funded or state-
1220 administered grant and loan program available to local
1221 governments to:

1222 a. Identify any specified local government financial match
1223 requirements and whether any portion of a match may be waived or
1224 is required to be waived, pursuant to law, and programs where a
1225 financial match waiver may be appropriate for rural local
1226 government applicants, if not contemplated by law.

1227 b. Identify grant and loan application evaluation criteria,
1228 including scoring procedures, for programs that may be perceived
1229 to be overly burdensome for rural local government applicants,
1230 and whether special accommodations or preferences for rural
1231 local governments may be appropriate.

1232 2. OPPAGA shall produce a report based on its review and
1233 submit the report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker
1234 of the House of Representatives by December 15, 2026.

1235 3. This paragraph expires June 30, 2027.

1236 Section 12. Section 288.014, Florida Statutes, is created
1237 to read:

1238 288.014 Renaissance Grants Program.—

1239 (1) The Legislature finds that it has traditionally
1240 provided programs to assist rural communities with economic
1241 development and enhance their ability to attract businesses and
1242 that, by providing that extra component of economic viability,
1243 rural communities are able to attract new businesses and grow
1244 existing ones. However, the Legislature finds that a subset of
1245 rural communities has decreased in population over the past
1246 decade, contributing to a decline in local business activity and
1247 economic development. The Legislature further finds that the

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1248 state must transform its assistance to these specific rural
1249 communities to help them achieve a necessary precursor of
1250 economic viability. The Legislature further finds that the
1251 approach intended by the creation of renaissance grants is to
1252 focus on reversing the economic deterioration in rural
1253 communities by retaining and attracting residents by giving them
1254 a reason to stay, which is the impetus of natural economic
1255 growth, business opportunities, and increased quality of life.

1256 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity within the department
1257 shall administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block
1258 grants to eligible counties. By October 1, 2025, the Office of
1259 Economic and Demographic Research shall certify to the Office of
1260 Rural Prosperity which counties are growth-impeded. For the
1261 purposes of this section, "growth-impeded" means a county that,
1262 as of the most recent population estimate, has had a declining
1263 population over the last 10 years. After an initial
1264 certification, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research
1265 shall annually certify whether the county remains growth-
1266 impeded, until the county has 3 consecutive years of population
1267 growth. Upon such certification of population growth, the county
1268 is eligible to participate in the program for 1 additional year
1269 in order for the county to prepare for the end of block grant
1270 funding.

1271 (3) (a) Each participating county shall enter into an
1272 agreement with the Office of Rural Prosperity to receive the
1273 block grant. Each county has broad authority to design its
1274 specific plan to achieve population growth within the broad
1275 parameters identified in this section. The Office of Rural
1276 Prosperity may not determine the manner in which the county

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1277 implements the block grant. However, regional rural community
1278 liaison center staff shall provide assistance in developing the
1279 county's plan, upon request.

1280 (b) Each participating county shall report annually to the
1281 Office of Rural Prosperity on activities undertaken,
1282 intergovernmental agreements entered into, and other information
1283 as required by the office.

1284 (c) Each participating county shall receive \$1 million from
1285 the funds appropriated to the program. Counties participating in
1286 the program shall make all attempts to limit expenses for
1287 administrative costs, consistent with the need for prudent
1288 management and accountability in the use of public funds. Each
1289 county may contribute other funds for block grant purposes,
1290 including local, state, or federal grant funds, or seek out in-
1291 kind or financial contributions from private or public sources
1292 to assist in fulfilling the activities undertaken.

1293 (4) (a) A participating county shall hire and retain a
1294 renaissance coordinator and may use block grant funds for this
1295 purpose. The renaissance coordinator is responsible for:

1296 1. Ensuring that block grant funds are used as provided in
1297 this section;

1298 2. Coordinating with other local governments, school
1299 boards, Florida College System institutions, or other entities;
1300 and

1301 3. Reporting as necessary to the state, including
1302 information necessary pursuant to subsection (7).

1303 (b) The Office of Rural Prosperity regional rural community
1304 liaison center staff shall provide assistance, upon request, and
1305 training to the renaissance coordinator to ensure successful

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1306 implementation of the block grant.

1307 (5) A participating county shall design a plan to make
1308 targeted investments in the community to achieve population
1309 growth and increase the economic vitality of the community. The
1310 plan must include the following key features for use of the
1311 state support:

1312 (a) Technology centers with extended hours located within
1313 schools or on school premises, administered by the local school
1314 board, for such schools which provide extended hours and support
1315 for access by students.

1316 (b) Facilities that colocate adult day care with child care
1317 facilities. The site-sharing facilities must be managed to also
1318 provide opportunities for direct interaction between generations
1319 and increase the health and well-being of both younger and older
1320 participants, reduce social isolation, and create cost and time
1321 efficiencies for working family members. The regional rural
1322 community liaison center staff of the Office of Rural Prosperity
1323 shall assist the county, upon request, with bringing to the
1324 Rural Economic Development Initiative or directly to the
1325 appropriate state agency recommendations necessary to streamline
1326 any required state permits, licenses, regulations, or other
1327 requirements.

1328 (c) Technology labs managed in agreement with the nearest
1329 Florida College System institution or a career center as
1330 established under s. 1001.44. Repurposing vacant industrial
1331 sites or existing office space must be given priority in the
1332 selection of lab locations. Each local technology lab must be
1333 staffed and open for extended hours with the capacity to
1334 provide:

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1335 1. Access to trainers and equipment necessary for users to
1336 earn various certificates or online degrees in technology;

1337 2. Hands-on assistance with applying for appropriate remote
1338 work opportunities; and

1339 3. Studio space with equipment for graduates and other
1340 qualifying residents to perform remote work that is based on the
1341 use of technology. Collaboration with community partners,
1342 including the local workforce development board as described in
1343 s. 445.007, to provide training opportunities, in-kind support
1344 such as transportation to and from the lab, financing of
1345 equipment for in-home use, or basic maintenance of such
1346 equipment is required.

1347 (6) In addition to the hiring of a renaissance coordinator,
1348 a participating county shall develop intergovernmental
1349 agreements for shared responsibilities with its municipalities,
1350 school board, and Florida College System institution or career
1351 center and enter into necessary contracts with providers and
1352 community partners in order to implement the plan.

1353 (7)(a) Every 2 years, the Auditor General shall conduct an
1354 operational audit as defined in s. 11.45 of each county's grant
1355 activities, beginning in 2026.

1356 (b) On December 31, 2026, and every year thereafter, the
1357 Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall submit an
1358 annual report of renaissance block grant recipients by county to
1359 the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
1360 Representatives. The report must provide key economic indicators
1361 that measure progress in altering longer-term trends in the
1362 county. The Office of Rural Prosperity shall provide the Office
1363 of Economic and Demographic Research with information as

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requested to complete the report.

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

(9) This section expires June 30, 2040.

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

288.0175 Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

(3)(a) The Office of Rural Prosperity shall contract with one or more smart technology lead organizations to administer the grant program for the purpose of deploying public

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1393 infrastructure smart technology in rural communities. In
1394 accordance with the terms required by the office, the smart
1395 technology lead organization shall provide grants to counties
1396 and municipalities located within a rural area of opportunity
1397 for public infrastructure smart technology projects.

1398 (b) The office's contract with a smart technology lead
1399 organization must specify the contract deliverables, including
1400 financial reports and other reports due the office, timeframes
1401 for achieving contractual obligations, and any other
1402 requirements the office determines are necessary. The contract
1403 must require the smart technology lead organization to do the
1404 following:

1405 1. Collaborate with counties and municipalities located in
1406 rural areas of opportunity to identify opportunities for local
1407 governments to institute cost-effective smart technology
1408 solutions for improving public services and infrastructure.

1409 2. Provide technical assistance to counties and
1410 municipalities located in rural areas of opportunity in
1411 developing plans for public infrastructure smart technology
1412 projects.

1413 3. Assist counties and municipalities located in rural
1414 areas of opportunity in connecting with other communities,
1415 companies, and other entities to leverage the impact of each
1416 public infrastructure smart technology project.

1417 (4) The office shall include in its annual report required
1418 by s. 288.013(6) a description of the projects funded under this
1419 section.

1420 Section 14. Subsections (1), (2), and (4) of section
1421 288.018, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

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288.018 Regional Rural Development Grants Program.—

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

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

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

(2) In approving the participants, the office ~~department~~

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shall require the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(b) The financial match requirements for projects in rural

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1480 communities.

1481 (2)(1) Each REDI agency and organization shall consider the
1482 impact on and ability of rural communities to meet and be
1483 competitive under such criteria, scoring, and requirements. Upon
1484 review, each REDI agency and organization shall ~~review all~~
1485 ~~evaluation and scoring procedures and~~ develop a proposal for
1486 modifications to those procedures which minimize the financial
1487 and resource impact to a rural community, including waiver or
1488 reduction of any required financial match requirements ~~impact of~~
1489 ~~a project within a rural area.~~

1490 (a)(2) Evaluation criteria and scoring procedures must
1491 provide for an appropriate ranking, when ranking is a component
1492 of the program, based on the proportionate impact that projects
1493 have on a rural area when compared with similar project impacts
1494 on an urban area. Additionally,

1495 ~~(3)~~ evaluation criteria and scoring procedures must
1496 recognize the disparity of available fiscal resources for an
1497 equal level of financial support from an urban county or
1498 municipality and a rural county or municipality.

1499 ~~(a)~~ The evaluation criteria should weight contribution in
1500 proportion to the amount of funding available at the local
1501 level.

1502 (b) Match requirements must be waived or reduced for rural
1503 communities. When appropriate, an in-kind match must ~~should~~ be
1504 allowed and applied as a financial match when a rural community
1505 county is experiencing economic financial distress as defined in
1506 s. 288.0656 through elevated unemployment at a rate in excess of
1507 ~~the state's average by 5 percentage points or because of the~~
1508 ~~loss of its ad valorem base.~~ Donations of land, though usually

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not recognized as an in-kind match, may be treated as such. As
appropriate, each agency and organization that applies for or
receives federal funding must request federal approval to waive
or reduce the financial match requirements, if any, for projects
in rural communities.

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

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

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

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

288.021 Economic development liaison.—

(3) When practicable, the staff member appointed as the
economic development liaison shall also serve as the agency

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representative for the Rural Economic Development Initiative
pursuant to s. 288.0656.

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

288.065 Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund.—

(1) The Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund
Program is established within the Office of Rural Prosperity
~~department~~ to facilitate the use of existing federal, state, and
local financial resources by providing local governments with
financial assistance to further promote the economic viability
of rural communities. These funds may be used to finance
initiatives directed toward maintaining or developing the
economic base of rural communities, especially initiatives
addressing employment opportunities for residents of these
communities.

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

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

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

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

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

4. A county or municipality within a rural area of

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1567 opportunity.

1568
1569 For purposes of this paragraph, population is determined in
1570 accordance with the most recent official estimates pursuant to
1571 s. 186.901 and must include those residing in incorporated and
1572 unincorporated areas of a county, ~~based on the most recent~~
1573 ~~official population estimate as determined under s. 186.901,~~
1574 ~~including those residing in incorporated areas and those~~
1575 ~~residing in unincorporated areas of the county, or to units of~~
1576 ~~local government, or economic development organizations~~
1577 ~~substantially underwritten by a unit of local government, within~~
1578 ~~a rural area of opportunity.~~

1579 ~~(c)(b)~~ Requests for loans must ~~shall~~ be made by application
1580 to the office ~~department~~. Loans must ~~shall~~ be made pursuant to
1581 agreements specifying the terms and conditions agreed to between
1582 the applicant and the office ~~department~~. The loans are ~~shall be~~
1583 the legal obligations of the applicant.

1584 ~~(d)(e)~~ All repayments of principal and interest shall be
1585 returned to the loan fund and made available for loans to other
1586 applicants. However, in a rural area of opportunity designated
1587 under s. 288.0656 ~~by the Governor~~, and upon approval by the
1588 office ~~department~~, repayments of principal and interest may be
1589 retained by the applicant if such repayments are dedicated and
1590 matched to fund regionally based economic development
1591 organizations representing the rural area of opportunity.

1592 (3) The office ~~department~~ shall manage the fund,
1593 establishing loan practices that must include, but are not
1594 limited to, procedures for establishing loan interest rates,
1595 uses of funding, application procedures, and application review

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1596 procedures. The office has ~~department shall have~~ final approval
1597 authority for any loan under this section.

1598 (4) Notwithstanding ~~the provisions of~~ s. 216.301, funds
1599 appropriated for this loan fund may ~~purpose shall~~ not be subject
1600 to reversion.

1601 (5) The office shall include in its annual report required
1602 under s. 288.013 detailed information about the fund, including
1603 loans made during the previous fiscal year, loans active, loans
1604 terminated or repaid, and the amount of funds not obligated as
1605 of 14 days before the date the report is due.

1606 Section 18. Subsections (1), (2), and (3) of section
1607 288.0655, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (6) is
1608 added to that section, to read:

1609 288.0655 Rural Infrastructure Fund.—

1610 (1) There is created within the Office of Rural Prosperity
1611 ~~department~~ the Rural Infrastructure Fund to facilitate the
1612 planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in
1613 rural communities which will encourage job creation, capital
1614 investment, and the strengthening and diversification of rural
1615 economies by promoting tourism, trade, and economic development.
1616 Grants under this program may be awarded to a unit of local
1617 government within a rural community or rural area of opportunity
1618 as defined in s. 288.0656; or to a regional economic development
1619 organization, a unit of local government, or an economic
1620 development organization substantially underwritten by a unit of
1621 local government for an infrastructure project located within an
1622 unincorporated area that has a population of 15,000 or less, has
1623 been in existence for 100 year or more, is contiguous to a rural
1624 community, and has been adversely affected by a natural disaster

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1625 or presents a unique economic development opportunity of
1626 regional impact.

1627 (2)(a) Funds appropriated by the Legislature shall be
1628 distributed by the office ~~department~~ through grant programs that
1629 maximize the use of federal, local, and private resources,
1630 including, but not limited to, those available under the Small
1631 Cities Community Development Block Grant Program.

1632 (b) To facilitate access of rural communities and rural
1633 areas of opportunity as defined by the Rural Economic
1634 Development Initiative to infrastructure funding programs of the
1635 Federal Government, such as those offered by the United States
1636 Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of
1637 Commerce, and state programs, including those offered by Rural
1638 Economic Development Initiative agencies, and to facilitate
1639 local government or private infrastructure funding efforts, the
1640 office ~~department~~ may award grants for up to 75 percent of the
1641 total infrastructure project cost, or up to 100 percent of the
1642 total infrastructure project cost for a project located in a
1643 rural community as defined in s. 288.0656(2) which is also
1644 located in a fiscally constrained county as defined in s.
1645 218.67(1) or a rural area of opportunity as defined in s.
1646 288.0656(2). Eligible uses of funds may include improving any
1647 inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action
1648 that prohibits economic or community growth and reducing the
1649 costs to community users of proposed infrastructure improvements
1650 that exceed such costs in comparable communities. Eligible uses
1651 of funds include improvements to public infrastructure for
1652 industrial or commercial sites and upgrades to or development of
1653 public tourism infrastructure. Authorized infrastructure may

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1654 include the following public or public-private partnership
1655 facilities: storm water systems; telecommunications facilities;
1656 roads or other remedies to transportation impediments; nature-
1657 based tourism facilities; or other physical requirements
1658 necessary to facilitate tourism, trade, and economic development
1659 activities in the community. Authorized infrastructure may also
1660 include publicly or privately owned self-powered nature-based
1661 tourism facilities, publicly owned telecommunications
1662 facilities, and additions to the distribution facilities of the
1663 existing natural gas utility as defined in s. 366.04(3)(c), the
1664 existing electric utility as defined in s. 366.02, or the
1665 existing water or wastewater utility as defined in s.
1666 367.021(12), or any other existing water or wastewater facility,
1667 which owns a gas or electric distribution system or a water or
1668 wastewater system in this state when:

1669 1. A contribution-in-aid of construction is required to
1670 serve public or public-private partnership facilities under the
1671 tariffs of any natural gas, electric, water, or wastewater
1672 utility as defined herein; and

1673 2. Such utilities as defined herein are willing and able to
1674 provide such service.

1675 (c) The office department ~~department~~ may award grants of up to
1676 \$300,000 for infrastructure feasibility studies, design and
1677 engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and
1678 preparation or site readiness activities. Site readiness
1679 expenses may include clearing title, surveys, permitting,
1680 environmental studies, and regulatory compliance costs. Grants
1681 awarded under this paragraph may be used in conjunction with
1682 grants awarded under paragraph (b). In evaluating applications

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under this paragraph, the office ~~department~~ shall consider the extent to which the application seeks to minimize administrative and consultant expenses.

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

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

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consider the extent to which the application seeks to minimize administrative and consultant expenses.

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

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

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

288.0656 Rural Economic Development Initiative.—

(1)(a) Recognizing that rural communities and regions continue to face extraordinary challenges in their efforts to significantly improve their economies, specifically in terms of personal income, job creation, average wages, and strong tax bases, it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage and facilitate the location and expansion of major economic development projects of significant scale in such rural communities. The Legislature finds that rural communities are

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the essential conduits for the economy's distribution,
manufacturing, and food supply.

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

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

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

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

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

1. A county with a population of 75,000 or less ~~fewer~~.
2. A county with a population of 125,000 or less ~~fewer~~ which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or less ~~fewer~~.
3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.
4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an

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incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or less
~~fewer~~ and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural
or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as
rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress
factors identified in paragraph (a) ~~paragraph (c)~~ and verified
by the office ~~department~~.

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

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

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

1. The Department of Transportation.
2. The Department of Environmental Protection.
3. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
4. The Department of State.
5. The Department of Health.

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- 1799 6. The Department of Children and Families.
1800 7. The Department of Corrections.
1801 8. The Department of Education.
1802 9. The Department of Juvenile Justice.
1803 10. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
1804 11. Each water management district.
1805 12. CareerSource Florida, Inc.
1806 13. VISIT Florida.
1807 14. The Florida Regional Planning Council Association.
1808 15. The Agency for Health Care Administration.
1809 16. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

1810 (b) An alternate for each designee must ~~shall~~ also be
1811 chosen, who must also be a deputy secretary or higher-level
1812 staff person, and the names of the designees and alternates must
1813 shall be reported sent to the director of the Office of Rural
1814 Prosperity. At least one rural liaison from each regional rural
1815 community liaison center must participate in the REDI meetings
1816 Secretary of Commerce.

1817 (c) REDI shall meet at least each month, but may meet more
1818 often as necessary. Each REDI representative, or his or her
1819 designee, shall be physically present or available by means of
1820 electronic communication for each meeting.

1821 (d) ~~(b)~~ Each REDI representative must have comprehensive
1822 knowledge of his or her agency's functions, both regulatory and
1823 service in nature, and of the state's economic goals, policies,
1824 and programs. This person shall be the primary point of contact
1825 for his or her agency with REDI on issues and projects relating
1826 to ~~economically distressed~~ rural communities and with regard to
1827 expediting project review, shall ensure a prompt effective

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1828 response to problems arising with regard to rural issues, and
1829 shall work closely with the other REDI representatives in the
1830 identification of opportunities for preferential awards of
1831 program funds, contractual or other agreement provisions which
1832 meet the requirements of s. 215.971, and allowances and waiver
1833 of program requirements when necessary to encourage and
1834 facilitate ~~long-term private~~ capital investment and job
1835 creation.

1836 (e)~~(d)~~ The REDI representatives shall work with REDI in the
1837 review and evaluation of statutes and rules for adverse impact
1838 on rural communities and the development of alternative
1839 proposals to mitigate that impact.

1840 (f)~~(d)~~ Each REDI representative shall be responsible for
1841 ensuring that each district office or facility of his or her
1842 agency is informed quarterly about the Rural Economic
1843 Development Initiative and for providing assistance throughout
1844 the agency in the implementation of REDI activities.

1845 (7)

1846 (b) Designation as a rural area of opportunity under this
1847 subsection shall be contingent upon the execution of a
1848 memorandum of agreement among the office ~~department~~; the
1849 governing body of the county; and the governing bodies of any
1850 municipalities to be included within a rural area of
1851 opportunity. Such agreement shall specify the terms and
1852 conditions of the designation, including, but not limited to,
1853 the duties and responsibilities of the county and any
1854 participating municipalities to take actions designed to
1855 facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses in
1856 the area, as well as the recruitment of new businesses to the

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1857 area.

1858 ~~(c) Each rural area of opportunity may designate catalyst~~
1859 ~~projects, provided that each catalyst project is specifically~~
1860 ~~recommended by REDI and confirmed as a catalyst project by the~~
1861 ~~department. All state agencies and departments shall use all~~
1862 ~~available tools and resources to the extent permissible by law~~
1863 ~~to promote the creation and development of each catalyst project~~
1864 ~~and the development of catalyst sites.~~

1865 (8) REDI shall submit a report to the Office of Rural
1866 Prosperity ~~department~~ on all REDI activities for the previous
1867 fiscal year as a supplement to the office's ~~department's~~ annual
1868 report required under s. 288.013 ~~s. 20.60~~. This supplementary
1869 report must include:

1870 (a) A status report on every project ~~all projects~~ currently
1871 being coordinated through REDI, the number of preferential
1872 awards and allowances made pursuant to this section in detail by
1873 award, allowance, or match type, the dollar amount of such
1874 awards, and the names of the recipients.

1875 (b) A description of all waivers of program requirements
1876 granted, including a list by program of each waiver that was
1877 granted. If waivers were requested but were not granted, a list
1878 of ungranted waivers, including reasons why the waivers were not
1879 granted, must be included.

1880 (c) Detailed information as to the economic impact of the
1881 projects coordinated by REDI.

1882 (d) Recommendations based on the review and evaluation of
1883 statutes and rules having an adverse impact on rural communities
1884 and proposals to mitigate such adverse impacts.

1885 (e) Legislative recommendations for statutory waivers or

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1886 reductions of specified economic development program
1887 requirements, including financial match waivers or reductions,
1888 for applicants within rural areas of opportunity.

1889 (f) Outcomes of proposals submitted pursuant to s. 288.019.
1890 Section 20. Section 288.06561, Florida Statutes, is
1891 repealed.

1892 Section 21. Subsections (2), (3), and (4) of section
1893 288.0657, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1894 288.0657 Florida rural economic development strategy
1895 grants.—

1896 (2) The Office of Rural Prosperity shall provide ~~department~~
1897 ~~may accept and administer moneys appropriated to the department~~
1898 ~~for providing~~ grants to assist rural communities to develop and
1899 implement strategic economic development plans. Grants may be
1900 provided to assist with costs associated with marketing a site
1901 to business and site selectors for an economic development
1902 project that is part of an economic development plan, either as
1903 part of funding to develop and implement a plan or related to an
1904 already adopted plan.

1905 (3) A rural community, an economic development organization
1906 in a rural area, or a regional organization representing at
1907 least one rural community or such economic development
1908 organizations may apply for such grants. The rural liaison for
1909 the rural community shall assist those applying for such grants.

1910 (4) The office ~~department~~ shall establish criteria for
1911 reviewing grant applications. These criteria must ~~shall~~ include,
1912 but are not limited to, the degree of participation and
1913 commitment by the local community and the application's
1914 consistency with local comprehensive plans or the application's

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proposal to ensure such consistency. Grants for marketing may include funding for advertising campaign materials and costs associated with meetings, trade missions, and professional development affiliated with site preparation and marketing. The office department shall review each application for a grant. ~~The department may approve grants only to the extent that funds are appropriated for such grants by the Legislature.~~

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

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

(13) FOUR-YEAR MARKETING PLAN.—

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

1. Continuation of overall tourism growth in this state.
2. Expansion to new or under-represented tourist markets.
3. Maintenance of traditional and loyal tourist markets.
4. Coordination of efforts with county destination marketing organizations, other local government marketing groups, privately owned attractions and destinations, and other private sector partners to create a seamless, four-season advertising campaign for the state and its regions.
5. Development of innovative techniques or promotions to build repeat visitation by targeted segments of the tourist population.
6. Consideration of innovative sources of state funding for tourism marketing.
7. Promotion of nature-based tourism, including, but not

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limited to, promotion of the Florida Greenways and Trails System as described under s. 260.014 and the Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail Network as described under s. 339.81.

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

9. Promotion of heritage tourism.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(a) Create a strategic plan that has goals and strategies for increasing and improving the availability of, access to, and use of broadband Internet service in this state. In development of the plan, the department shall incorporate applicable federal broadband activities, including any efforts or initiatives of the Federal Communications Commission, to improve broadband Internet service in this state. The plan must identify available federal funding sources for the expansion or improvement of broadband. The strategic plan must be submitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by June 30, 2022. The strategic plan must be updated biennially thereafter. The plan must include a process to review and verify public input regarding transmission speeds and availability of broadband Internet service throughout this state. The office shall consult with each regional rural community liaison center within the Office of Rural Prosperity on the development and update of the plan.

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

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

(6) The office shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a quarterly report detailing the implementation of broadband activities in rural, unserved, and underserved communities. Such information must be listed by county and include the amount of

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state and federal funds allocated and expended in the county by program; the progress toward deploying broadband in the county; any technical assistance provided; the activities of the local technology planning teams and partnerships; and the fulfillment of any other duties of the office required by this part.

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

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

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

319.32 Fees; service charges; disposition.—

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

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

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2060 2. Any remaining collections shall be paid into the State
2061 Transportation Trust ~~General Revenue~~ Fund.

2062 Section 27. Subsection (37) is added to section 334.044,
2063 Florida Statutes, to read:

2064 334.044 Powers and duties of the department.—The department
2065 shall have the following general powers and duties:

2066 (37) To provide technical assistance and support from the
2067 appropriate district of the department to counties that are not
2068 located in a metropolitan planning organization created pursuant
2069 to s. 339.175.

2070 Section 28. Section 339.0801, Florida Statutes, is amended
2071 to read:

2072 339.0801 Allocation of increased revenues derived from
2073 amendments to s. 319.32(5) (a) ~~by ch. 2012-128.~~—

2074 (1) The first \$200 million of funds that result from
2075 increased revenues to the State Transportation Trust Fund
2076 derived from the amendments to s. 319.32(5) (a) made by s. 11,
2077 chapter 2012-128, Laws of Florida, this act must be used
2078 annually, first as set forth in paragraph (a) subsection (1) and
2079 then as set forth in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) subsections
2080 (2)–(4), notwithstanding any other provision of law:

2081 (a) 1. (1) (a) Beginning in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and
2082 annually for 30 years thereafter, \$10 million shall be for the
2083 purpose of funding any seaport project identified in the adopted
2084 work program of the Department of Transportation, to be known as
2085 the Seaport Investment Program.

2086 2. (b) The revenues may be assigned, pledged, or set aside
2087 as a trust for the payment of principal or interest on revenue
2088 bonds, or other forms of indebtedness issued by an individual

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port or appropriate local government having jurisdiction thereof, or collectively by interlocal agreement among any of the ports, or used to purchase credit support to permit such borrowings. Alternatively, revenue bonds shall be issued by the Division of Bond Finance at the request of the Department of Transportation under the State Bond Act and shall be secured by such revenues as are provided in this subsection.

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

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

5.~~(e)~~ The proceeds of any revenue bonds or other indebtedness, after payment of costs of issuance and establishment of any required reserves, shall be invested in projects approved by the Department of Transportation and included in the department's adopted work program, by amendment if necessary. As required under s. 11(f), Art. VII of the State Constitution, the Legislature approves projects included in the department's adopted work program, including any projects added to the work program by amendment under s. 339.135(7).

6.~~(f)~~ Any revenues that are not used for the payment of bonds as authorized by this subsection may be used for purposes

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authorized under the Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Program. This revenue source is in addition to any amounts provided for and appropriated in accordance with ss. 311.07 and 320.20(3) and (4).

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

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

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

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

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

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section.

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

339.2816 Small County Road Assistance Program.—

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

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

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

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

2. As secondary criteria the department may consider:

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

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

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

d. Whether a road is considered a feeder road.

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

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

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

339.2817 County Incentive Grant Program.—

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

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

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

(c) The extent to which assistance would foster innovative public-private partnerships and attract private debt or equity investment;

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

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

(f) ~~(e)~~ The extent to which the project helps to maintain or

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protect the environment; and

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

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

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

339.2818 Small County Outreach Program.—

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

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

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

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

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annually appropriated for expenditure to support the Small County Outreach Program.

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

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

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

(Substantial rewording of section.

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

339.68 Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program.—

(1) The Legislature finds that increasing demands continue to be placed on rural arterial roads in this state by a fast-growing economy, continued population growth, and increased tourism. Investment in the rural arterial roads of this state is needed to maintain the safety, mobility, reliability, and

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resiliency of the transportation system in order to support the movement of people, goods, and commodities; to enhance economic prosperity and competitiveness; and to enrich the quality of life of the rural communities and the environment of this state.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(d) Whether the road is used to transport goods to or from warehouses, distribution centers, or intermodal logistics

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centers as defined in s. 311.101(2).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 33. (1) The Department of Transportation shall allocate the additional funds provided by this act to implement the Small County Road Assistance Program as created by s.

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339.2816, Florida Statutes, and amend the current tentative work program for the 2025-2026 through 2031-2032 fiscal years to include additional projects. In addition, before adoption of the work program, the department shall submit a budget amendment pursuant to s. 339.135(7), Florida Statutes, requesting budget authority necessary to implement the additional projects.

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

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

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

381.402 Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical Education Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

b. Emergency medicine practice in a rural hospital as defined in s. 395.602(2)(b) or rural emergency hospital as defined in s. 395.607(1)(a), provided the practitioner accepts Medicaid reimbursement if eligible for such reimbursement; or

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

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2379 must provide services to Medicaid patients.

2380 2. Providing 25 hours annually of volunteer ~~primary care~~
2381 services within the practitioner's scope of practice in a free
2382 clinic as specified in s. 766.1115(3)(d)14. or through another
2383 volunteer program operated ~~by the state~~ pursuant to part IV of
2384 chapter 110 and approved by the department. In order to meet the
2385 requirements of this subparagraph, the volunteer hours must be
2386 verifiable in a manner determined by the department.

2387 Section 35. Section 381.403, Florida Statutes, is created
2388 to read:

2389 381.403 Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant
2390 Program.—The Legislature recognizes that access to primary and
2391 preventive health care is critical for the well-being of the
2392 residents of this state. The Legislature also recognizes that
2393 many rural areas of this state have significantly fewer
2394 available physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous
2395 advanced practice registered nurses who serve those areas. To
2396 increase the availability of health care in such underserved
2397 rural areas, there is created the Rural Access to Primary and
2398 Preventive Care Grant Program within the Department of Health to
2399 use grants to incentivize the creation or expansion of health
2400 care practices in those areas.

2401 (1) As used in this section, the term:

2402 (a) "Autonomous advanced practice registered nurse" means
2403 an advanced practice registered nurse who is registered under s.
2404 464.0123 to engage in autonomous practice.

2405 (b) "Majority ownership" means ownership of more than 50
2406 percent of the interests in a private practice.

2407 (c) "Physician" means a physician licensed under chapter

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458 or chapter 459.

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

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

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

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

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

(2) The department shall award grants under the program to physicians, physician assistants, and autonomous advanced practice registered nurses who intend to open a new private practice in a qualifying rural area or who intend to open a new location within a qualifying rural area if the current private

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practice is located in a different county. To qualify for a grant, an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

(a) The practice must:

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

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

3. Accept Medicaid patients.

4. Provide services solely in primary care or preventative care, except that a physician, and any nurse licensed under chapter 464 or any physician assistant supervised by the physician, may provide services at the practice in primary care or preventative care, or services that are within the practitioner's scope of practice based on the physician's board-certified specialty in obstetrics, gynecology, general and family practice, geriatrics, internal medicine, pediatrics, or psychiatry.

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

1. Deidentified patient encounter data.

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2466 2. A detailed report on the use of grant funds until such
2467 funds are expended.

2468 (3) By March 1, 2026, the department shall create an
2469 application process for eligible physicians, physician
2470 assistants, and autonomous advanced practice registered nurses
2471 to apply for grants under the program. The application must
2472 require a detailed budget of anticipated use of grant funds and
2473 how the new or existing practice will meet the requirements of
2474 subsection (2). The department shall establish a ranking system
2475 to determine which applicants will be awarded grants if there
2476 are more applicants for the program than can be awarded grants
2477 with available appropriated funds.

2478 (4) Subject to specific appropriation, the department may
2479 award grants of up to \$250,000 to eligible applicants. Only one
2480 grant may be awarded per practice. Grant funds awarded for
2481 establishing a new private practice or a new practice location
2482 may be used for any of the following expenses:

2483 (a) Facility construction, acquisition, renovation, or
2484 lease.

2485 (b) Purchasing medical equipment.

2486 (c) Purchasing or implementing information technology
2487 equipment or services.

2488 (d) Purchasing or implementing telehealth technology.

2489 (e) Training on the use of medical equipment, information
2490 technology, or telehealth technology implemented under paragraph
2491 (b), paragraph (c), or paragraph (d), respectively.

2492 (5) Grant funds may not be used for any of the following:

2493 (a) Salaries.

2494 (b) Utilities.

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2495 (c) Internet or telecommunications services other than
2496 those necessary for implementing telehealth technology under
2497 paragraph (4) (d).

2498 (d) Insurance.

2499 (e) Incidental maintenance and repairs.

2500 (f) Disposable medical supplies.

2501 (g) Medicines or vaccines.

2502 (h) Licensing or certification fees, including costs for
2503 continuing education other than training under paragraph (4) (e).

2504 (6) The department shall enter into a contract with each
2505 grant recipient which details the requirements for the
2506 expenditure of grant funds for that recipient. The contract must
2507 include, at a minimum, all of the following:

2508 (a) The purpose of the contract.

2509 (b) Specific performance standards and responsibilities for
2510 the recipient under the contract, including penalties for not
2511 meeting such performance standards and responsibilities.

2512 (c) A detailed project or contract budget, if applicable.

2513 (d) Reporting requirements for grant recipients to provide
2514 information to the department under paragraph (2) (b) as well as
2515 any additional information the department deems necessary for
2516 the administration of the program.

2517 (7) The department may adopt rules to implement the
2518 program.

2519 (8) Beginning July 1, 2026, and each year thereafter in
2520 which there are outstanding contracts with grant recipients
2521 under subsection (6), the department shall provide a report to
2522 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
2523 the House of Representatives which includes, but need not be

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limited to, all of the following:

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

(b) The progress on each outstanding contract.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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diagnosis and management as well as real-world clinical experience through scenario-based learning, ultimately enhancing decisionmaking and patient outcomes.

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

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

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

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

(4) GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

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

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

2. Purchase simulation equipment and technology for training.

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

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2582 4. Develop quality improvement programs in one or more of
2583 the following specialty areas: emergency stroke care, emergency
2584 cardiac care, or emergency obstetric care.

2585 (b) Priority must be given to proposals that:

2586 1. Demonstrate collaboration between prehospital and in-
2587 hospital providers; or

2588 2. Show potential for significant improvement in patient
2589 outcomes in rural communities.

2590 (5) FUNDING LIMITS; REPORTING.—

2591 (a) Individual grants may not exceed \$100,000 per year.

2592 (b) Grant recipients must submit quarterly reports to the
2593 department documenting program activities, expenditures, and
2594 outcomes.

2595 (6) ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall monitor program
2596 implementation and outcomes. The department shall submit an
2597 annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and
2598 the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of
2599 each year, detailing program implementation and outcomes.

2600 (7) RULEMAKING.—The department may adopt rules to implement
2601 this section.

2602 (8) IMPLEMENTATION.—This section may be implemented only to
2603 the extent specifically funded by legislative appropriation.

2604 (9) REPEAL.—This section is repealed July 1, 2030, unless
2605 reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the
2606 Legislature.

2607 Section 37. Subsection (2) of section 395.6061, Florida
2608 Statutes, is amended to read:

2609 395.6061 Rural hospital capital improvement.—There is
2610 established a rural hospital capital improvement grant program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. "Rural health professional shortage area" means a rural community as defined in s. 288.0657 which is also designated as

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a health professional shortage area by the Health Resources and
Services Administration of the United States Department of
Health and Human Services.

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

420.9073 Local housing distributions.—

(3) Calculation of guaranteed amounts:

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

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

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

420.9075 Local housing assistance plans; partnerships.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(13)

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

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

2. The corporation shall consider the local response that

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

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

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

b. If the corporation terminates funds to a county, but an eligible municipality receiving a local housing distribution pursuant to an interlocal agreement maintains compliance with program requirements, the corporation shall thereafter distribute directly to the participating eligible municipality

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its share calculated in the manner provided in ss. 420.9072 and 420.9073.

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

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

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

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

(a) Exceptional student education;

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

(c) State and federal grant procurement and coordination;

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

(e) Insurance services;

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- (f) Risk management ~~insurance~~;
(g) Professional learning;
(h) College, career, and workforce development;
(i) Business and operational services ~~staff development~~;
(j) Purchasing; or
(k) Planning and accountability.

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

(b) Member districts shall designate a district that will serve as a fiscal agent for contractual and reporting purposes. Such fiscal agent district is entitled to reasonable

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compensation for accounting and other services performed. The regional consortium service organization shall retain all funds received from grants or contracted services to cover indirect or administrative costs associated with the provision of such services. The regional consortium service organization board of directors shall determine the products and services to be provided by the consortium; however, in all contractual matters, the school board of the fiscal agent district shall act on proposed actions of the regional consortium service organization.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1001.4511 Regional Consortia Service Organization Supplemental Services Program.—

(1) There is created the Regional Consortia Service Organization Supplemental Services Program to increase the ability of regional consortium service organizations under s.

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1001.451 to provide programs and services to consortia members through cooperative agreements. Program funds may be used to supplement member needs related to transportation; district finance personnel services; property insurance, including property insurance obtained from any source; cybersecurity support; school safety; college, career, and workforce development; academic support; and behavior support within exceptional student education services.

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

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

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

1009.635 Rural Incentive for Professional Educators.—

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

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

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2901 (a) Establishes permanent residency on or after July 1,
2902 2025, in a rural area of opportunity as designated pursuant to
2903 s. 288.0656. The address on an individual's state-issued
2904 identification card or driver license is evidence of residence.

2905 (b) Secures full-time employment as a teacher or
2906 administrator in a private school as defined in s. 1002.01, or
2907 as instructional or administrative personnel as those terms are
2908 defined in s. 1012.01(2) and (3), respectively, in the public
2909 school district located within the same rural area of
2910 opportunity as he or she resides.

2911 (c) Holds an associate degree, bachelor's degree,
2912 postgraduate degree, or certificate from an accredited
2913 institution earned before establishing residency.

2914 (d) Has an active student loan balance incurred for the
2915 completion of the qualifying degree or certificate.

2916 (3) LOAN REPAYMENT.—Eligible participants may receive up to
2917 \$15,000 in total student loan repayment assistance over 5 years,
2918 disbursed in annual payments not to exceed \$3,000 per year.
2919 Payments shall be made directly to the lender servicing the
2920 participant's student loan.

2921 (4) AWARD DISTRIBUTION.—Before disbursement of an award,
2922 the department shall verify that the participant:

2923 (a) Has maintained continuous employment with the school
2924 district in an instructional or administrative position;

2925 (b) Has received a rating of effective or highly effective
2926 pursuant to s. 1012.34; and

2927 (c) Has not been placed on probation, had his or her
2928 certificate suspended or revoked, or been placed on the
2929 disqualification list, pursuant to s. 1012.796.

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

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

(b) Monitor compliance with program requirements.

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

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

1013.62 Charter schools capital outlay funding.—

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

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

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

2. For construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought beginning in the 2025-

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2026 fiscal year, the value of 1 mill from the revenue generated pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)8.b.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(e) School districts shall distribute capital outlay funds

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

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

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

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

(2)(a) The department shall establish, as a part of the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund, a

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3017 separate account, in an amount determined by the Legislature, to
3018 be known as the "Special Facility Construction Account." The
3019 Special Facility Construction Account shall be used to provide
3020 necessary construction funds to school districts which have
3021 urgent construction needs but which lack sufficient resources at
3022 present, and cannot reasonably anticipate sufficient resources
3023 within the period of the next 3 years, for these purposes from
3024 currently authorized sources of capital outlay revenue. A school
3025 district requesting funding from the Special Facility
3026 Construction Account shall submit one specific construction
3027 project, not to exceed one complete educational plant, to the
3028 Special Facility Construction Committee. A district may not
3029 receive funding for more than one approved project in any 3-year
3030 period ~~or while any portion of the district's participation~~
3031 ~~requirement is outstanding~~. The first year of the 3-year period
3032 shall be the first year a district receives an appropriation.
3033 The department shall encourage a construction program that
3034 reduces the average size of schools in the district. The request
3035 must meet the following criteria to be considered by the
3036 committee:

3037 1. The project must be deemed a critical need and must be
3038 recommended for funding by the Special Facility Construction
3039 Committee. Before developing construction plans for the proposed
3040 facility, the district school board must request a
3041 preapplication review by the Special Facility Construction
3042 Committee or a project review subcommittee convened by the chair
3043 of the committee to include two representatives of the
3044 department and two staff members from school districts not
3045 eligible to participate in the program. A school district may

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request a preapplication review at any time; however, if the district school board seeks inclusion in the department's next annual capital outlay legislative budget request, the preapplication review request must be made before February 1. Within 90 days after receiving the preapplication review request, the committee or subcommittee must meet in the school district to review the project proposal and existing facilities. To determine whether the proposed project is a critical need, the committee or subcommittee shall consider, at a minimum, the capacity of all existing facilities within the district as determined by the Florida Inventory of School Houses; the district's pattern of student growth; the district's existing and projected capital outlay full-time equivalent student enrollment as determined by the demographic, revenue, and education estimating conferences established in s. 216.136; the district's existing satisfactory student stations; the use of all existing district property and facilities; grade level configurations; and any other information that may affect the need for the proposed project.

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

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

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Board of Education.

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

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

6. Upon construction, the total cost per student station, including change orders, must not exceed the cost per student station as provided in subsection (6) unless approved by the Special Facility Construction Committee. At the discretion of the committee, costs that exceed the cost per student station for special facilities may include legal and administrative fees, the cost of site improvements or related offsite improvements, the cost of complying with public shelter and hurricane hardening requirements, cost overruns created by a disaster as defined in s. 252.34(2), costs of security enhancements approved by the school safety specialist, and unforeseeable circumstances beyond the district's control.

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

8.a.(I) For construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought before the

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

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

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

b. For construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought beginning in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the district shall, for a minimum of 3 years before submitting the request and for the initial year of the appropriation and the 2 years following the initial appropriation, levy the maximum millage against the district's

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nonexempt assessed property value as authorized under s.
1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from
the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6).
The district is not required to budget the funds toward the
project, but must use the funds as authorized pursuant to s.
1011.71 or s. 212.055(6), as applicable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(4) The Department of Commerce is authorized to establish 17.00 full-time equivalent positions with associated salary rate of 1,060,000 in the Office of Rural Prosperity for the purpose

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of implementing this act. The following specific positions, classifications, and pay plans are authorized: 1.00 Director of General Operation, Class Code 9327, Pay Grade 940; 15.00 Government Analyst II, Class Code 2225, Pay Grade 026; and 1.00 Administrative Assistant II, Class Code 0712, Pay Grade 018.

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

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

Section 49. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$4 million in nonrecurring funds and \$1 million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund are appropriated to the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce to implement the Rural Community Development Revolving Loan Fund under s. 288.065, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

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

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

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

Section 53. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is appropriated to the Department of Health for the purpose of implementing the Rural Access to Primary and Preventive Care Grant Program created under s. 381.403, Florida Statutes. Grant funds shall be awarded over a 5-year period. Notwithstanding s. 216.301, Florida Statutes, and pursuant to s. 216.351, Florida Statutes, the unexpended balance of funds appropriated pursuant to this section which is not disbursed by June 30 of the fiscal year in which funds are appropriated may be carried forward

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through the 2033-2034 fiscal year.

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

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

Section 56. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sums of \$187,255 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund and \$250,358 in recurring funds from the Medical Care Trust Fund are appropriated to the Agency for Health Care Administration to establish a Diagnosis-Related Grouping (DRG) reimbursement methodology for critical access hospitals, as defined in s. 408.07, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of providing inpatient reimbursement to such a hospital in amounts comparable to the reimbursement the hospital would receive for inpatient services from the federal Medicare program. The 2025-2026 fiscal year General Appropriations Act shall establish the DRG reimbursement methodology for critical access hospital inpatient services as directed in s. 409.905(5)(c), Florida Statutes. Health plans

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that participate in the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care program
shall pass through the fee increase to providers in this
appropriation.

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

Section 58. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$3.6
million in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
appropriated to the Department of Education to implement s.
1001.451, Florida Statutes, as amended by this act.

Section 59. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the sum of \$25
million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General
Revenue Fund to the Department of Education to be distributed to
regional consortium service organizations under s. 1001.451,
Florida Statutes, in order to provide funds pursuant to s.
1001.4511, Florida Statutes. These funds shall be allocated as

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follows: \$5,555,149 to the Heartland Educational Consortium;
\$11,912,923 to the North East Florida Educational Consortium;
and \$7,531,928 to the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium. The
funds must be distributed to each regional consortium service
organization no later than 30 days following the release of the
funds to the department.

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

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

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

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

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

212.205 Sales tax distribution reporting.—By March 15 of

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 64. Subsection (2) of section 257.193, Florida

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Statutes, is amended to read:

257.193 Community Libraries in Caring Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

288.11621 Spring training baseball franchises.—

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—

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

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

2. Pay or pledge for the payment of debt service on, or to fund debt service reserve funds, arbitrage rebate obligations,

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or other amounts payable with respect thereto, bonds issued for the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or renovation of such facility, or for the reimbursement of such costs or the refinancing of bonds issued for such purposes.

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

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

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

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

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

288.11631 Retention of Major League Baseball spring

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training baseball franchises.—

(2) CERTIFICATION PROCESS.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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6. Includes any provision deemed prudent by the department.

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—

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

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

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

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

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

2. If applicable, any existing agreement with a spring training franchise for the use of a facility has expired.

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

2. A certified applicant may request that the department notify the Department of Revenue to suspend further distributions of state funds made available under s. 212.20(6)(d)7.c. ~~s. 212.20(6)(d)6.e.~~ for 12 months after

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3481 expiration of an existing agreement with a spring training
3482 franchise to provide the certified applicant with an opportunity
3483 to enter into a new agreement with a spring training franchise,
3484 at which time the distributions shall resume.

3485 3. The expenditure of state funds distributed to an
3486 applicant certified after July 1, 2013, must begin within 48
3487 months after the initial receipt of the state funds. In
3488 addition, the construction or renovation of a spring training
3489 facility must be completed within 24 months after the project's
3490 commencement.

3491 Section 68. Subsection (1) of section 443.191, Florida
3492 Statutes, is amended to read:

3493 443.191 Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund; establishment
3494 and control.—

3495 (1) There is established, as a separate trust fund apart
3496 from all other public funds of this state, an Unemployment
3497 Compensation Trust Fund, which shall be administered by the
3498 Department of Commerce exclusively for the purposes of this
3499 chapter. The fund must consist of:

3500 (a) All contributions and reimbursements collected under
3501 this chapter;

3502 (b) Interest earned on any moneys in the fund;

3503 (c) Any property or securities acquired through the use of
3504 moneys belonging to the fund;

3505 (d) All earnings of these properties or securities;

3506 (e) All money credited to this state's account in the
3507 federal Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund under 42 U.S.C. s.
3508 1103;

3509 (f) All money collected for penalties imposed pursuant to

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s. 443.151(6)(a);

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) Funds deposited into the Florida Agricultural

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

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

288.9935 Microfinance Guarantee Program.—

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

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

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

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

(d) Industry data about the borrowers, including the six-

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digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
code;

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

(f) The number of loan guarantee applications received;

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 72. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
reference thereto, paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section
125.0104, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

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

(5) AUTHORIZED USES OF REVENUE.—

(c) A county located adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico or the
Atlantic Ocean, except a county that receives revenue from taxes
levied pursuant to s. 125.0108, which meets the following
criteria may use up to 10 percent of the tax revenue received
pursuant to this section to reimburse expenses incurred in

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3597 providing public safety services, including emergency medical
3598 services as defined in s. 401.107(3), and law enforcement
3599 services, which are needed to address impacts related to
3600 increased tourism and visitors to an area. However, if taxes
3601 collected pursuant to this section are used to reimburse
3602 emergency medical services or public safety services for tourism
3603 or special events, the governing board of a county or
3604 municipality may not use such taxes to supplant the normal
3605 operating expenses of an emergency medical services department,
3606 a fire department, a sheriff's office, or a police department.
3607 To receive reimbursement, the county must:

3608 1.a. Generate a minimum of \$10 million in annual proceeds
3609 from any tax, or any combination of taxes, authorized to be
3610 levied pursuant to this section;

3611 b. Have at least three municipalities; and

3612 c. Have an estimated population of less than 275,000,
3613 according to the most recent population estimate prepared
3614 pursuant to s. 186.901, excluding the inmate population; or

3615 2. Be a fiscally constrained county as described in s.
3616 218.67(1).

3617
3618 The board of county commissioners must by majority vote approve
3619 reimbursement made pursuant to this paragraph upon receipt of a
3620 recommendation from the tourist development council.

3621 Section 73. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment
3622 made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a
3623 reference thereto, subsection (3) of section 193.624, Florida
3624 Statutes, is reenacted to read:

3625 193.624 Assessment of renewable energy source devices.—

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

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

196.182 Exemption of renewable energy source devices.—

(2) The exemption provided in this section does not apply to a renewable energy source device that is installed as part of a project planned for a location in a fiscally constrained county, as defined in s. 218.67(1), and for which an application for a comprehensive plan amendment or planned unit development zoning has been filed with the county on or before December 31, 2017.

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

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

(1) Beginning in fiscal year 2008-2009, the Legislature

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

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

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

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

Section 77. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment

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made by this act to section 218.67, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 218.135, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

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

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

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

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

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

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reduction in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from the implementation of the revision of s. 6(a), Art. VII of the State Constitution.

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

252.35 Emergency management powers; Division of Emergency Management.—

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

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

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

288.102 Supply Chain Innovation Grant Program.—

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

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

403.064 Reuse of reclaimed water.—

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

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

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

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

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

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Services in accordance with s. 218.32.

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

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

589.08 Land acquisition restrictions.—

(2) The Florida Forest Service may receive, hold the custody of, and exercise the control of any lands, and set aside into a separate, distinct and inviolable fund, any proceeds derived from the sales of the products of such lands, the use thereof in any manner, or the sale of such lands save the 25 percent of the proceeds to be paid into the State School Fund as provided by law. The Florida Forest Service may use and apply such funds for the acquisition, use, custody, management, development, or improvement of any lands vested in or subject to the control of the Florida Forest Service. After full payment has been made for the purchase of a state forest to the Federal Government or other grantor, 15 percent of the gross receipts from a state forest shall be paid to the fiscally constrained county or counties, as described in s. 218.67(1), in which it is located in proportion to the acreage located in each county for use by the county or counties for school purposes.

(3) The Florida Forest Service shall pay 15 percent of the gross receipts from the Goethe State Forest to each fiscally constrained county, as described in s. 218.67(1), in which a

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portion of the respective forest is located in proportion to the forest acreage located in such county. The funds must be equally divided between the board of county commissioners and the school board of each fiscally constrained county.

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

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

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

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

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

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403.0741 Grease waste removal and disposal.—

(6) REGULATION BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—

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

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

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

(7)

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

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

288.9962 Broadband Opportunity Program.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

339.66 Upgrade of arterial highways with controlled access facilities.—

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

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

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

420.9072 State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program.—The

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

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

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

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

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420.9076, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

420.9076 Adoption of affordable housing incentive strategies; committees.—

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

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

Section 91. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 420.9073, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (2) of section 420.9079, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

420.9079 Local Government Housing Trust Fund.—

(2) The corporation shall administer the fund exclusively for the purpose of implementing the programs described in ss. 420.907-420.9076 and this section. With the exception of monitoring the activities of counties and eligible municipalities to determine local compliance with program requirements, the corporation shall not receive appropriations

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from the fund for administrative or personnel costs. For the purpose of implementing the compliance monitoring provisions of s. 420.9075(9), the corporation may request a maximum of one-quarter of 1 percent of the annual appropriation per state fiscal year. When such funding is appropriated, the corporation shall deduct the amount appropriated prior to calculating the local housing distribution pursuant to ss. 420.9072 and 420.9073.

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