



Substitute House Bill No. 5383

Public Act No. 10-168

AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*) (a) In order to coordinate, implement and promote responsible economic growth and activities in this state, any of the following entities may, after approval by the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Assistant Secretary of Economic Development of the United States Department of Commerce, either individually or in conjunction with one or more other such entities, establish a regional economic development district for the purposes of sections 2 to 5, inclusive, of this act and sections 32-10, 16a-27 and 8-35a of the general statutes: (1) A regional economic development commission formed under section 7-137 of the general statutes; (2) any organization that has a strategy that would meet the requirements of section 2 of this act and has been approved by the Assistant Secretary of Economic Development of the United States Department of Commerce; (3) a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding internal revenue code of the United States, as amended from time to time; (4) another regional economic development commission or corporation formed under any other

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provision of the general statutes or any special act; or (5) a regional planning organization, as defined in section 4-124i of the general statutes. The entity or entities establishing a regional economic development district shall provide for a board of directors of the district. Not more than eight regional economic development districts shall be established pursuant to this subsection.

(b) The boundaries of such districts shall encompass one or more planning regions, designated or redesignated pursuant to section 16a-4a of the general statutes, or, to the extent practicable, be contiguous with boundaries of former county government regions. Each regional economic development district established pursuant to this section shall comply with the distress requirement provisions of 13 CFR 301.3(a)(1).

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*) (a) The board of directors of a regional economic development district shall comply with the provisions of 13 CFR 304.2 and shall prepare and approve a comprehensive economic development strategy for the district to address identified economic development problems in a manner that promotes economic development and opportunity and housing availability, fosters effective transportation access, improves workforce development, enhances and protects the environment, balances resources through sound management of development, and encourages responsible growth and development. A comprehensive economic development strategy shall contain:

(1) An analysis of economic and community development problems and opportunities, including incorporation of any relevant material or suggestions from other government-sponsored or supported plans;

(2) Background and history of economic development in the district, with a discussion of the economy, geography, population, labor force, resources and the environment;

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(3) A discussion of community participation in the planning efforts for the strategy;

(4) The goals and objectives for (A) taking advantage of the opportunities in the district, and (B) solving the economic development problems of the district;

(5) A plan of action, including suggested projects to implement the goals and objectives set forth in subdivision (4) of this subsection; and

(6) Performance measures that will be used to evaluate whether and to what extent such goals and objectives have been met.

(b) Upon approving the comprehensive economic development strategy for a district, the board of directors of the district shall submit the strategy to each regional planning organization, as defined in section 4-124i of the general statutes, serving any portion of the geographical area of such district, except if such regional planning organization is not part of the regional economic development district pursuant to section 1 of this act. The regional planning organizations shall study the strategy and shall report their findings and recommendations thereon to the district not later than ninety days after the receipt of the strategy.

(c) After review and comment on the comprehensive economic development strategy under subsection (b) of this section, the board of directors of the district shall submit the strategy to the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management. The secretary and the commissioner shall review the strategy and, not later than sixty days after receiving the strategy, shall either notify such board of directors of approval of the strategy or provide the board with recommendations for modifying the strategy for consistency with the state plan of conservation and development adopted pursuant to chapter 297 of the

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general statutes and the state-wide comprehensive economic development strategy required under section 32-1o of the general statutes. If neither the commissioner nor the secretary notifies the board within such sixty days, the strategy shall be deemed to have been approved. If said commissioner or secretary recommends modifications, the board shall modify the strategy in accordance with such recommendations and resubmit the strategy for review in the same manner as for the original submission of the strategy.

(d) The board of directors of a regional economic development district shall, annually, report to the commissioner and the secretary on progress made in implementing the comprehensive economic development strategy. A new or revised strategy shall be developed at least once every five years. The board shall submit each new or revised strategy for review and approval in accordance with the same procedure as for a strategy under subsections (b) and (c) of this section.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*) (a) The boards of directors of regional economic development districts shall submit each adopted and approved comprehensive economic development strategy to the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management for review. Said commissioner and secretary may review and make recommendations to the regional economic development districts for consolidation of the comprehensive economic development strategies to encompass not more than eight regions for the entire state. After review by said commissioner and secretary and with the concurrence from the board of directors of the districts, the regional economic development districts may submit such strategy to the Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce for approval pursuant to 42 USC 3121 et seq.

(b) A board of directors of a state approved regional economic development district that adopts a comprehensive economic

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development strategy in accordance with sections 1 and 2 of this act may request the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to approve the region as an economic development district. If said commissioner approves the regional economic development district as an economic development district, said commissioner shall recommend to the Governor that the region be designated by the Governor as an economic development district. Upon such designation by the Governor, the board of directors may request federal designation as an economic development district from the Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce pursuant to 42 USC 3121 et seq. Approval by the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development of the comprehensive economic development strategy under section 2 of this act shall be deemed to meet the requirements of 42 USC 3121 et seq.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*) The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development may, within available appropriations, make priority regional grants to regional economic development districts for municipal development projects and for economic development and manufacturing assistance pursuant to sections 8-186 to 8-200, inclusive, of the general statutes and sections 32-220 to 32-234, inclusive, of the general statutes.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*) Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes or any public or special act, projects identified in comprehensive economic development strategies approved by the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management or the Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce under sections 2 and 3 of this act shall be eligible for funding from any bond funds available to the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development.

Approved June 8, 2010