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H.B. No. 2598

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation and funding of the Texas Rural Job Development Fund.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 481.078, Government Code, is amended by adding Subsection (k) to read as follows:

(k) The fund may be used to make one or more grants to the Office of Rural Community Affairs to implement the office's powers and duties relating to rural job development. Subsections (e-1), (f), (g), (h), (i), and (j) do not apply to a grant under this subsection.

SECTION 2. Chapter 487, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter P to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER P. TEXAS RURAL JOB DEVELOPMENT FUND

Sec. 487.701. PURPOSE. The purpose of this subchapter is to:

(1) promote rural employment opportunities, including economic development projects that will stimulate job creation or assist in job retention;

(2) foster regional collaboration for the development of rural employment opportunities;

(3) enhance leadership capacity and civic participation in rural Texas in an inclusive manner;

(4) facilitate wealth creation and retention in rural

1 communities to decrease long-term dependency on state and federal
2 resources;

3 (5) assist in the development of a highly skilled and
4 productive workforce in rural communities;

5 (6) assist the workers in rural areas of this state in
6 obtaining education, skills training, and labor market information
7 to enhance their employability, earnings, and standard of living;
8 and

9 (7) assist rural communities in this state by
10 providing economic incentive programs for job creation,
11 attraction, and expansion.

12 Sec. 487.702. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

13 (1) "Development fund" means the Texas Rural Job
14 Development Fund.

15 (2) "Rural community" means a rural area as defined by
16 the office.

17 Sec. 487.703. TEXAS RURAL JOB DEVELOPMENT FUND. (a) The
18 Texas Rural Job Development Fund is an account in the general
19 revenue fund. The account is composed of:

20 (1) legislative appropriations;

21 (2) money received from the Texas Enterprise Fund
22 under Section 481.078;

23 (3) gifts, grants, donations, and matching funds
24 received under Subsection (b); and

25 (4) other money required by law to be deposited in the
26 account.

27 (b) The office may solicit and accept gifts, donations, and

1 grants of money from the federal government, local governments,
2 private corporations, or other persons to be used for the purposes
3 of this subchapter.

4 (c) Income from money in the account shall be credited to
5 the account.

6 (d) Money in the development fund may be used only for the
7 purposes of this subchapter.

8 Sec. 487.704. INCENTIVES. The office shall offer
9 incentives in the form of grants and loans to entrepreneurs and
10 businesses creating or retaining jobs in a rural community.

11 SECTION 3. The executive committee of the Office of Rural
12 Community Affairs shall adopt rules for the program under
13 Subchapter P, Chapter 487, Government Code, as added by this Act,
14 not later than March 1, 2008.

15 SECTION 4. Implementation of the program under Subchapter
16 P, Chapter 487, Government Code, as added by this Act, is contingent
17 on appropriation of funding by the legislature.

18 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
19 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
20 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
21 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
22 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.