

By: Meza

H.B. No. 4459

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the addition of certain provisions to the Texas Rural
3 Investment Fund.

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

5 SECTION 1. Chapter 12.046, Agriculture Code, is amended by
6 adding to read as follows:

7 Sec. 12.046. TEXAS RURAL INVESTMENT FUND. (a) In this
8 section:

9 (1) "Fund" means the Texas Rural Investment Fund.

10 (2) "Rural community" means a municipality with a
11 population of less than 50,000 or a county with a population of less
12 than 200,000.

13 (b) The fund is a dedicated account in the general revenue
14 fund and consists of:

15 (1) appropriations of money to the fund by the
16 legislature;

17 (2) gifts, grants, including federal grants, and other
18 donations received for the fund; and

19 (3) interest earned on the investment of money in the
20 fund.

21 (b-1) The department shall administer the fund and select
22 recipients of grants and loans from the fund.

23 (c) The fund may be used by the department only to:

24 (1) pay for grants or loans to public or private

1 entities for projects in rural communities that have strong local
2 support, provide positive return on the state's investment, and
3 stimulate one or more of the following:

- 4 (A) local entrepreneurship;
- 5 (B) job creation or retention;
- 6 (C) new capital investment;
- 7 (D) strategic economic development planning;
- 8 (E) individual economic and community
9 development leadership training;
- 10 (F) housing development; ~~or~~
- 11 (G) innovative workforce education; ~~and~~
- 12 (H) workforce training and/or rehabilitative
13 programming for veterans; or
- 14 (I) preservation and cultivation of pollinators
15 critical to agriculture; and

16 (2) administer the grant and loan program under this
17 section.

18 (d) In awarding a grant or loan of money from the fund for a
19 project, the department shall consider:

- 20 (1) the project's effect on job creation and wages;
- 21 (2) the financial strength of the applicant;
- 22 (3) the applicant's business history;
- 23 (4) an analysis of the relevant business sector;
- 24 (5) whether there is public or private sector
25 financial support for the project; and
- 26 (6) whether there is local support for the project.

27 (e) The fund is exempt from the application of Sections

1 403.095 and 404.071, Government Code.

2 (f) The department may accept grants, gifts, or donations
3 from any source that are made for the purposes of this section.
4 Money received under this subsection shall be deposited in the
5 fund.

6 (g) The department shall adopt rules to administer this
7 section.

8 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
9 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
10 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
11 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
12 Act takes effect September 1, 2019.