



1           WHEREAS, many of the state's largest industrial investments, infrastructure assets,  
2 and energy facilities are located in rural parishes, generating employment opportunities and  
3 local tax bases that benefit the entire state; and

4           WHEREAS, rural Louisiana faces distinct challenges, including population decline  
5 in most regions, workforce access barriers, broadband connectivity gaps, healthcare access  
6 shortages, and limited infrastructure capacity, which require targeted and coordinated policy  
7 responses; and

8           WHEREAS, rural communities throughout Louisiana stand to benefit significantly  
9 from numerous federal programs designed to support economic development, infrastructure  
10 investment, workforce training, broadband deployment, and community revitalization,  
11 including programs administered through the United States Department of Agriculture, the  
12 Delta Regional Authority, the Economic Development Administration, the Federal  
13 Communications Commission, and other federal agencies; and

14           WHEREAS, identifying, coordinating, and maximizing access to these federal  
15 funding opportunities, in conjunction with state resources and local initiatives, can  
16 strengthen rural infrastructure, expand economic opportunity, improve workforce readiness,  
17 and support long-term sustainable development across Louisiana's rural parishes; and

18           WHEREAS, multiple state agencies play a critical role in rural economic vitality,  
19 including but not limited to:

- 20           (1) The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.
- 21           (2) The Louisiana Department of Conservation and Energy.
- 22           (3) The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
- 23           (4) The Louisiana Department of Health.
- 24           (5) The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.
- 25           (6) Louisiana Economic Development.
- 26           (7) Louisiana Works.
- 27           (8) The office of broadband development and connectivity.
- 28           (9) The office of community development.
- 29           (10) The office of rural development.

1           WHEREAS, while each agency carries specific statutory responsibilities, greater  
2 interagency alignment and coordinated strategic planning would strengthen Louisiana's  
3 ability to attract investment, support workforce development, improve infrastructure  
4 deployment, and accelerate economic opportunity in rural parishes; and

5           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Legislature has vested Louisiana Economic Development  
6 with the authority and responsibility to formulate, implement, and coordinate programs to  
7 promote and diversify the economic development of the state; and

8           WHEREAS, Louisiana Economic Development is authorized to assist in the  
9 attraction, retention, expansion, and development of business and industry; to cooperate with  
10 federal, state, regional, and local public agencies; to enter into cooperative endeavors; and  
11 to coordinate activities designed to promote economic growth; and

12           WHEREAS, a more intentional, data-driven, and regionally coordinated rural  
13 economic development strategy would enhance competitiveness, maximize return on state  
14 and federal investments, and ensure that economic growth reaches every parish of the state.

15           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
16 commend the continued economic growth occurring throughout the state and recognizes the  
17 essential role of rural communities in sustaining Louisiana's economic strength and global  
18 competitiveness.

19           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana acknowledges the  
20 statutory authority granted to Louisiana Economic Development pursuant to R.S. 51:2301  
21 to promote, coordinate, and assist in statewide economic development activities.

22           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana hereby urges and  
23 requests Louisiana Economic Development, consistent with its authority pursuant to R.S.  
24 51:2301, and in conjunction with other state agencies, to continue studying and evaluating  
25 the economic assets, infrastructure capacity, workforce resources, and development  
26 opportunities present in rural parishes of the state.

27           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana hereby directs  
28 Louisiana Economic Development, consistent with its statutory authority, to develop and  
29 implement a coordinated rural economic development strategy that does all of the following:

1           (1) Coordinates with the office of rural development and other relevant state  
2 agencies to align economic development funding streams and strategic initiatives.

3           (2) Strengthens alignment between workforce development programs and rural  
4 employer needs.

5           (3) Identifies industry sectors and competitive advantages uniquely suited for rural  
6 parishes.

7           (4) Provides periodic reporting to the Legislature regarding measurable outcomes,  
8 benchmarks, and progress in advancing rural economic growth.

9           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana hereby urges and  
10 requests Louisiana Economic Development, consistent with its authority pursuant to R.S.  
11 51:2301 to dedicate a staff person within the department to serve as a Rural Economic  
12 Development Coordinator, whose responsibilities shall include implementing the directives  
13 contained in this Resolution, facilitating interagency coordination related to rural economic  
14 development initiatives, and tracking measurable outcomes in rural parishes.

15           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana urges and requests  
16 that all relevant state agencies cooperate with Louisiana Economic Development in carrying  
17 out such coordinated efforts, consistent with existing statutory authority.

18           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
19 secretary of Louisiana Economic Development, the commissioner of administration, and the  
20 heads of each relevant state agencies, to include the Louisiana Department of Agriculture  
21 and Forestry, the Louisiana Department of Conservation and Energy, the Louisiana  
22 Department of Environmental Quality, the Louisiana Department of Health, the Louisiana  
23 Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Economic Development,  
24 Louisiana Works, the office of broadband development and connectivity, the office of  
25 community development, and the office of rural development.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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Wyble

Urges and requests Louisiana Economic Development, in conjunction with other state agencies, to continue studying and evaluating the economic assets, infrastructure capacity, workforce resources, and development opportunities present in rural parishes of the state.