

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 66

BY REPRESENTATIVE WYBLE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request Louisiana Economic Development to lead, in coordination with the Governor's Office of Rural 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.

WHEREAS, since January 2024, Louisiana has experienced significant economic momentum, including the announcement of more than ninety-three billion dollars in capital investment, representing over twelve thousand eight hundred new direct jobs and eighteen thousand retained jobs across multiple industry sectors; and

WHEREAS, key industry sectors including energy, manufacturing, petrochemical production, liquefied natural gas, advanced manufacturing, logistics, and emerging technologies have continued to expand, solidifying Louisiana's position as a national leader in industrial development and global energy markets; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's ports, transportation infrastructure, and natural resources, many of which are located in or directly serve rural communities, have been instrumental in supporting economic expansion and global trade; and

WHEREAS, rural communities comprise a substantial geographic and cultural portion of the state and serve as the backbone of Louisiana's agricultural production, energy

infrastructure, fisheries, timber industry, manufacturing base, and natural resource economy;
and

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.
- (2) The Louisiana Department of Conservation and Energy.
- (3) The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
- (4) The Louisiana Department of Health.
- (5) The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.
- (6) Louisiana Economic Development.
- (7) Louisiana Works.
- (8) The office of broadband development and connectivity.
- (9) The office of community development.
- (10) The Governor's Office of Rural Development.

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the Governor's Office of Rural Development serves as the state's primary advocate and resource for rural communities, charged with acting as a clearinghouse for rural development information; and

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

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana hereby urges and requests Louisiana Economic Development, consistent with its authority pursuant to R.S. 51:2301 et seq., to lead, in coordination with the Governor's Office of Rural Development, and 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Louisiana Economic Development shall issue a report to the Legislature no later than January 1, 2027, giving an update on the efforts outlined in this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of Louisiana Economic Development, the commissioner of administration, and the heads of each relevant state agencies, to include the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the Louisiana Department of Conservation and Energy, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the Louisiana Department of Health, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Economic Development,

Louisiana Works, the office of broadband development and connectivity, the office of community development, and the Governor's Office of Rural Development.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE