



The Small County Coalition
2015 Legislative Program

Adopted
November 20, 2014

Legislative Districts Representing Small Counties

Populations Under 150,000
And Associate Members *

13 of 40 Senate Districts Include Small Counties

Senate District 1 – Don Gaetz	Holmes, Jackson, Walton, and Washington
Senate District 2 – Greg Evers	Santa Rosa*
Senate District 3 – Bill Montford	Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Hamilton, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, and Wakulla
Senate District 4 – Aaron Bean	Nassau
Senate District 5 – Charlie Dean	Baker, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Levy, Suwannee, and Union
Senate District 6 – John Thrasher	Flagler, and Putnam
Senate District 7 – Rob Bradley	Bradford and Clay*
Senate District 11 – Alan Hays	Sumter
Senate District 18 – Wilton Simpson	Sumter
Senate District 21 – Denise Grimsley	Highlands, Martin, and Okeechobee
Senate District 26 – Bill Galvano	DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, and Highlands
Senate District 32 – Joe Negron	Indian River, and Martin
Senate District 39 – Dwight Bullard	Hendry and Monroe

20 of 120 House Districts Include Small Counties

House District 2 – Mike Hill	Santa Rosa*
House District 3 – Doug Broxson	Santa Rosa*
House District 5 – Brad Drake	Holmes, Jackson, Walton, and Washington
House District 7 – Halsey Beshears	Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Jefferson, Lafayette, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, and Wakulla
House District 8 – Alan Williams	Gadsden
House District 10 – Elizabeth Porter	Baker, Columbia, Hamilton, and Suwannee
House District 11 – Janet Adkins	Nassau
House District 18 – Travis Cummings	Clay*
House District 19 – Charles VanZant	Bradford, Clay, Putnam, Union
House District 21 – Keith Perry	Dixie, and Gilchrist
House District 22 – Charlie Stone	Levy
House District 24 – Travis Hudson	Flagler
House District 33 – Marlene O’Toole	Sumter
House District 34 – Jimmie T. Smith	Citrus
House District 54 – Debbie Mayfield	Indian River
House District 55 – Cary Pigman	Glades, Highlands, and Okeechobee
House District 56 – Ben Albritton	DeSoto, and Hardee
House District 80 – Matt Hudson	Hendry
House District 82 – MaryLynn Magar	Martin
House District 120 – Holly Merrill Raschein	Monroe

The SMALL COUNTY COALITION

Legislative Program for 2015

Introduction

The Small County Coalition is a statewide alliance of county commissions from small and rural counties. The purpose of the Coalition is to give increased visibility and support to the issues to small counties and rural communities.

The Small County Coalition's primary mission is to help Florida's small and rural counties address legislative issues from a small county/rural perspective and work effectively with state agencies leadership.

The Small County Coalition believes in the importance of a state rural policy that protects the character of our small and rural areas; promotes economic development; and, maintains and promotes the viability of existing small county economies such as agriculture and eco-tourism.

The Small County Coalition supports programs that improve the financial viability and fiscal capacity of Florida's local governments in small counties.

The Small County Coalition supports programs that help provide services to Floridians who reside in small counties; Floridians who visit their communities for enjoyment; and, Visitors from outside the state who travel through small counties in route to destinations in and out of Florida.

The Small County Coalition is hopeful that the Florida Legislature will use the following suggestions to guide their actions relating to small and rural areas:

MAJOR LEGISLATIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- *Continue Funding in High Priority Need Areas;*
- *Ensure Effectiveness of Economic Development Efforts; Stimulate Employment Growth; and Target Actions to Protect Against Job Losses or Economic Instability;*
- *Oppose Proposals that Shift Cost from State to Local level, Increase Local Costs, and/or are "One Size Fits All" approaches;*
- *Identify and Eliminate, Waive, Delay, or Mitigate Requirements, Regulations, Mandated Criteria, Reports, Studies, or other requirements that are non-critical, have unintended consequences, and result in increased local spending; and,*
- *Provide for "Meaningful Local Involvement" in State or Regional activities and local decisions.*

Priorities to Guide the 2015 Legislative Session

The Small County Coalition submits the following suggestions for consideration by the Governor, Cabinet Members, Members of the Florida Legislature, the Leadership within State Agencies and, other local, state, and federal interests that might be supportive of Florida's small and rural communities.

Support mitigating the impact within Medicaid County Cost Share Formula to a set increase. –

The Small County Coalition supports establishing a cap on the individual county Medicaid cost share growth that remedies the disparity caused by the formula change mandated in SB 1520 in the 2013 Legislative Session. The State is requested to provide an appropriation to offset the county cost share in excess of the set cap.

Protect priority program funding - The Small County Coalition requests that funding levels to high valued grant programs and revenue sharing be protected. These programs include – Small County Road funding, Revenue Sharing, Fiscally Constrained programs; State Aid for Local Libraries; Support for Transportation Projects and Programs; Transportation Disadvantaged; Regional Planning Councils, Housing funds; County Health Department Funding and Rural Health Initiatives; Aerial Photography; Small County Water Projects; Payment In Lieu of Taxes; Courthouse and infrastructure projects.

Protect Fiscally Constrained County Offset Funding – The Small County Coalition requests a Fiscally Constrained funding component with any proposed constitutional amendment that reduces local revenue capacity.

Protect Rural Water Resources – Water resources are a critical asset to Florida's rural economy and future economic development efforts. The Small County Coalition supports state funding of water projects that protect and enhance water quality and water quantity. In addition, the Coalitions suggests funding wastewater infrastructure in areas where land application remains the primary cost-effective method of septage disposal. The Small County Coalition opposes additional statutory requirements relating to water-infrastructure that are not accompanied with sufficient funding to comply with requirements for timelines and construction.

Disposal of Septic Waste - The Small County Coalition supports extending the authority for land application of septage which is set to expire in 2016 until funding is provided to counties that do not have the fiscal resources to provide alternative disposal methods.

Land Acquisition - The Small County Coalition supports provisions at the state level that require the involvement of local officials within land acquisition programs for the purpose of identifying impacts and determining specific actions that are necessary to enable subsequent community development.

Payment In Lieu of Taxes - The Small County Coalition supports comprehensive Payment In Lieu of Taxes programs that offset the impact of lands acquired by Federal, State, or other tax-exempt entities. PILT programs should be funded in a fashion, so as not to diminish the fiscal capacity of small counties. Regarding lands purchased by Water Management Districts, the Coalition requests that funding from the Water Management Trust Fund be allocated to the water management districts for Payment In Lieu of Taxes to eligible counties. In addition, the Small County Coalition requests that the Legislature consider adjusting PILT payments to accommodate the increased value and/or the valued use of the property by the purchasing entity.

Rural Economic Development - The Small County Coalition supports reauthorization of the Florida Enterprise Zone program with changes that increase effectiveness of the program in rural areas – eliminate the require location in blighted areas. The Small County Coalition supports the creation of a Rural Grants Program that will assist with upfront infrastructure costs relating to a certified sites program and construction of “speculative” buildings to help assist rural economic development. The Small County Coalition supports the creation of a Tax Incentive reimbursement program to offset the cost of ad valorem tax incentives necessary to secure economic development projects in Florida's small rural communities.

Rural Health Care – The Small County Coalition supports restoring funding reductions in operating support to County Health Departments.

Funding for Jails and EOC's - The Small County Coalition supports funding to assist in expansion and construction of local jail facilities and emergency operation centers in counties that lack the resources to address critical construction needs.

Support Efforts to Protect, Promote and Enhance the Agriculture Industry - The Small County Coalition supports state and federal efforts to research and assist the citrus industry in addressing and controlling the damage and threat caused by citrus greening/Huanglongbing (HLB). The Small County Coalition supports funding for small county projects prioritized and recommended within the Agriculture Education and Program Facility program.

Promote the Sustainability of Marine Resources - The Small County Coalition is concerned with the short and long-term sustainability of the saltwater and freshwater water bodies and the impact of water-related environmental and regulatory issues on marine and freshwater resources. Recreational fishing, fisheries production, and water-related ecotourism are vital to the State of Florida, in all coastal counties, and especially in the small counties where employment opportunities are limited. The Small County Coalition urges all local, state, and federal agencies to coordinate programs concerning renewable marine resources. The Small County Coalition recognizes the importance of water quality and water flow in areas where oysters and shellfish are produced, and where fishing resources are critical to the local economy. The Small County Coalition supports efforts to protect the marine and freshwater fishing industry and urges that regulatory decisions be based on current science and stock assessment data and take into consideration economic impacts on coastal economies. The Small County Coalition supports the efforts of the State of Florida to restore the historical water flow levels in the Apalachicola River Basin. The Small County Coalition supports programs and funding that provides assistance to the Shellfish industry in the Apalachicola and Nature Coast regions.

Transportation Disadvantaged in Rural Areas – The Small County Coalition is concerned about the transportation needs of Floridians that qualify for transportation disadvantaged services and the impact on the provision of services resulting from the removal of Medicaid Non Emergency Transportation (NET) from coordination under statutes. Counties in rural areas are experiencing decreases in funding resulting from the fragmentation of the coordinated systems and are requesting specific funding to support Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation services. The Small County Coalition requests the Florida Legislature to provide funding to address the unmet demand for transportation service in Florida's rural areas.

Provide Revenue Flexibility – The Small County Coalition supports increased flexibility in local revenue sources as determined for local funding needs. Specifically, the Coalition requests additional flexibility in the use of the funds generated by the discretionary \$65.00 cost on criminal and traffic cases provided in s. 939.185, F.S.

Local Regulatory Authority - The Small County Coalition supports county commissions having local regulatory flexibility to exceed state requirements within county jurisdictions, if the local county commission determines local conditions warrant more stringent requirements than those required by the state.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND FISCAL POLICY PROPOSALS

Cost Shifts and Increasing Costs– The Small County Coalition is concerned with cost-cutting recommendations that shift responsibilities and increased requirements to the local level. The Small County Coalition requests opposition to unfunded legislative or agency proposals that impact services or increase the cost of local governments.

- Oppose the shifting of program costs to the local level.
- Oppose legislation that shifts administrative or un-funded responsibilities to local governments.
- Offset the cost of any fund shifts on Florida’s fiscally constrained small counties.
- Continue allocating funding to offset the impact of the Department of Juvenile Justice pre-trial detention costs shift on fiscally constrained counties.

Revenue Sharing

- Evaluate State and Local Revenue Sharing Programs to enhance funding to small counties that evidence fiscal hardships, rely heavily of local ad valorem, and/or demonstrate conditions of limited revenue capacity.

Fiscally Constrained Counties

- Enhanced funding is currently provided to Fiscally Constrained Counties within State Revenue Sharing; and additional revenue offsets are provided for the impact of Amendment 1, Juvenile Pretrial Detention Costs, and, for Conservation Easement exemptions provided in the Florida Constitution. The Small County Coalition requests continued commitment to provide Fiscally Constrained offset funding for programs currently funded.
- Protect the Fiscally Constrained Revenue Sharing Program - Ensure a “No Harm” standard in any effort to change the funding source or the criteria for the Fiscally Constrained Program.
- Continue funding commitment to Fiscally Constrained counties.

Florida Retirement System – The Small County Coalition supports a Florida Retirement System that is stable and sustainable. The Florida Legislature is requested to maintain current provisions and benefits for employees and retirees participating in the program.

Provide Special Project Infrastructure Funding - The Small County Coalition requests special funding to address special infrastructure and local projects including: Small County Courthouse Renovations, Emergency Shelters needs, Repair or replacement of bridges rated below satisfactory on DOT inspections Roads, Parks, Water Projects, Libraries, and other non-recurring local priorities.

Meaningful Involvement of Local Officials in State and Regional Actions – The Small County Coalition requests that state and regional agencies provide “Meaningful Local Involvement” when making decisions, issuing permits, establishing rules, and/or are developing agency actions the impact a local community or adjacent communities. This includes notifying local officials of agency actions; providing opportunity for local input; providing for a “full cost disclosure”; providing for a complete analysis of impacts to local communities; and provisions for local government be involved and express support or opposition to the proposed actions. The Small County Coalition also recommends that Agency Boards, Commissions, Advisory Councils including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Water Management Districts include representatives from small counties, rural areas and local governments.

Pre-emption of Local Regulatory Authority and Oversight - Oppose legislation that pre-empts local government involvement in local issues that may need local regulation and/or oversight. Support repeal of statutes that pre-empt or restrict local government regulation or oversight of local issues.

Provide Revenue Flexibility –

- The Small County Coalition supports increased flexibility in local revenue sources as determined for local funding needs.

Regional Planning Councils

- Regional Planning Councils provide planning and technical services and economic development support activities to local governments. Regional Planning Council assistance is especially helpful to Florida's rural local governments.
- The Small County Coalition supports funding of regional planning councils.

Impact Fees

- Impact fees should continue to be authorized through local home rule authority guided by local conditions, such as, growth rates, infrastructure needs and fiscal capacity of the local community.

Rural Health Care –

- Local Health Departments provide essential health care programs and services in Florida's rural communities. The Small County Coalition supports the current structure for Health Departments and requests priority funding for health departments including increased primary health care services in small counties.
- Implement steps to **limit health care costs** on local governments.
- Continue state funding to **reimburse county Health Departments** that provide primary care and/or dental services in rural areas and support fiscal sustainability of County Health Departments.
- Increase funding to **meet health-related transportation needs of indigent and disadvantaged populations.**

Small County Courts

- Provide funding to support **Small County Courthouse** Renovation and Construction Projects.
- Ensure that small counties and rural areas have sufficient resources for the operation of Florida's court system.

Small County Jails

- Provide funding to assist in expansion and construction of local jail facilities in small counties that are experiencing overcrowding resulting from incarceration of state parole violations.

Parks and Recreation

- Fully fund projects recommended within the FRDAP program.
- Provide special project funding for local recreation infrastructure.

Small County Technical Assistance Program

- Restore the funding level for the Small County Technical Assistance Program .

Small County Libraries

- Support state aid funding.
- Protect equalization component within the current formula
- Provide opportunity for legislative funding for main library structures in small counties that do not meet Federal Square Footage standards, demonstrate that they meet appropriate local conditions and funding

County Revenue Issues

- Authorize non-charter counties to levy Communications Services Tax at the level authorized for charter counties and cities. Communications Services Tax - Currently provides that charter counties and cities can levy communications services tax at a rate of up to 5.2% while non-charter counties can levy only up to 1.72%. The tax is applied to purchases on telephone service, cable service, and wireless service. F.S. 202.20(a)
- Authorize non-charter counties to levy the Public Service Tax. The "Municipality Utilities Tax" provides cities and charter counties with authority to levy a rate of up to 10% on purchases of natural gas, electricity and water. Charter Counties got the ability to levy this from a court case in

the 90's. The court ruled that Charter Counties had all powers of local self-government. F.S. 166.231

Emergency Management

- **Infrastructure Needs** – provide funding for emergency management related facilities to meet the evacuation and shelter needs in Florida’s small counties.
- **Road Capabilities** - Ensure small county roads receive the support needed within the Strategic Intermodal System and the Florida Transportation Plan to accommodate evacuation needs of coastal and urban communities.
- **Communications** – Ensure the necessary funding to meet the communication equipment needs in rural areas.

Affordable Housing

- Maintain and protect the existing state housing trust funds for affordable housing programs, specifically the local S.H.I.P programs.

Liability Issues

- Maintain Sovereign Immunity Limits and the current process for resolving claims.
- Evaluate and revise the legislation pertaining to presumption relating to Police and Firefighters to ensure claims are in fact job-related.

Limit Training and Hiring Mandates –

- Small county officials support increased opportunities to enhance professionalism in key program areas through relevant and accessible training opportunities tiered to meet local needs. The Small County Coalition requests the Florida Legislature and State Agencies avoid mandating rigid training and hiring requirements for Local Positions.

TRANSPORTATION AND ROAD POLICY PROPOSALS

Small County Road Programs – The Small County Coalition requests that the Florida Legislature continue to provide increased funding for Small County Rural Assistance Program (SCRAP) and the Small County Outreach Program. Funding in FY 14-15 for SCRAP and SCOP totaled \$82.7 million. In addition, the Small County Coalition requests consideration of special funding to support repair or replacement of bridges rated below satisfactory on DOT inspections.

Small County Road Funding

- Small County Road Assistance Program (339.2816 FS) and the Small County Outreach Program (339.2818 FS) provide critical road funding in small counties.
- The Small County Coalition requests funding to support bridge repair or replacement for bridges rated below satisfactory by DOT evaluations.
- Provide continued technical assistance that would facilitate funding for regional transportation projects in rural counties.

Strategic Intermodal System

- Ensure that the Florida's Strategic Intermodal System is accessible from all areas of the state, includes strategic emerging transportation hubs, corridors and connectors important to rural communities, and is not funded at the expense of other road programs important to small counties.

Florida Transportation Plan 2060

- Ensure that the Florida Transportation Plan provides sufficient focus, direction and funding to address the development of efficient road systems in Florida's rural counties.

Dirt Roads

- Ensure that local governments have the authority to initiate routine maintenance on existing infrastructure (roads, ditches, driveways, etc.) without having to comply with burdensome, overly prescriptive and costly permit requirements.

Transportation Disadvantaged

- The Transportation Disadvantaged program responds to critical transportation needs in Florida's rural counties. Floridians that are unable to self-provide transportation to the medical appointments, employment, and other locations rely heavily on this program. The Small County Coalition requests that funding for the Transportation Disadvantaged programs that are providing critical services to the medically needy, elderly, and developmentally challenged be protected and supports additional funding to meet the unmet demand of citizens needing transportation disadvantaged services.

Energy Issues

- Develop programs to maximize buying power of state and local governments to influence favorable pricing for fuel efficient equipment, vehicles and actual fuel purchases.
- Ensure aggressive oversight and enforcement relating to consumer protection from energy costs.
- Consider approaches to develop alternative fuel sources.

Gas and Sales Tax

- Consider indexing local option fuel taxes to an inflation factor.
- Review distribution formulas for GAS TAX and SALES TAX to ensure fair distribution to areas that do not have significant Points of Collections within their communities

Road Reclassification

- Allow counties demonstrating fiscal hardship to reclassify counties roads to the state road system.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY PROPOSALS

Water Utilization and Transfer

Water resources are a critical asset to Florida's rural economy and future economic development efforts. The Small County Coalition requests that the Florida Legislature, the State Agencies that oversee water resources, and, the Water management Districts work closely with Florida's county leadership to protect and provide sustainable water resources in Florida's small counties. The Small County Coalition recommends: Maintaining current water management structure; Continuing Local Sources First Philosophy; and, Ensuring local government participation in water supply availability determinations. The Small County Coalition supports funding assistance in support of water projects that provide infrastructure critical for economic growth, environmental protection, water quality improvements, and, address other local and regional needs. The Small County Coalition opposes additional statutory requirements relating to water-infrastructure that are not accompanied with sufficient funding to comply with timelines and construction.

- Ensure local government participation in water supply availability determinations;
- Continue Local Sources First Philosophy; and,
- Require that prior to transferring water from another region or county, entities in areas desiring water transfer, shall:
 - Maximize utilization of local sources to the extent to which sustainability is impacted;
 - Implement conservation methods or other locally identified opportunities;
 - Take steps to limit cause of increased consumption, such as a moratorium on new construction until an adequate supply of water is available in the community; and,
 - Ensure that any transfer determination meets a "No Harm" standard in reference to the region from which water is being transferred.
- Continue State efforts to protect adequate water flow levels in the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, Flint River Basin.

Florida Fish and Wildlife - Fisheries and wildlife issues are very important to Florida's small counties. Florida's small counties have significant amounts of forest, undisturbed land and rural coastal communities. Decisions impacting these areas, including regulation related to hunting, fishing, bear management, "Big Animal" permits and other commission actions have significant consequence. The Small County Coalition requests that the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission work with the Small County Coalition on issues where decisions that have significant consequences and to establish a protocol for discussions of mutual concern.

Small County Solid Waste Program Funding - Small County Solid Waste Grants are funded at \$3.0 million. The Small County Coalition requests a funding increase to implement programs included in FS 403.706 (4). Provide increase in funding for small county solid waste and recycling grants. Streamline reporting requirements for counties exempt from the Recycling Goal.

Water Projects - Provide funding for Sewer and Water line hookups and Storm Water Projects including Innovative Water Supply Initiatives, and other local infrastructure project needs.

Coastal And Marine Impacts

- Support research and program initiatives that will ascertain the causes and provide for remedies relating to Red Tide, algae blooms, forms of water pollution and other related environmental degradation occurring in Florida's coastal waters.
- Initiate comprehensive program to offset the economic impacts that Oil Spills, Red Tide, Hurricane damage, Gas Increases, and Coastal Water quality problems have had on all elements of Florida's marine industries.
- Support a Working Waterfronts program that ensures local government participation in development of local plans.

Non-native Invasive Species

- Ensure sufficient funding and support to effectively address the management and spread of non-native invasive upland and aquatic species throughout Florida.
- The Small County Coalition requests support and appropriate regulatory leadership to address the spread of “Lion” Fish with Florida waters.

Agriculture

- Promote, protect and strengthen efforts to support the agricultural economy of the State of Florida and other industries that are critical to the economies of rural areas.
- Ensure a coordinated state/local policy to support the unique land use issues of agricultural properties and ensure that local governments retain ability to establish local ordinance regulating land use issues.
- Provide funding for the Rural Lands Stewardship Program and the Rural & Family Lands Protection Act, as well as, other programs structured to preserve agricultural lands and promote Agriculture.
- Maintain existing ad valorem taxation policies relating to Agricultural property.

Growth Management

- Ensure that growth management requirements in rural counties are not overly burdensome and costly; do not limit or burden potential for economic growth; and, include provisions for waivers of provisions if determined appropriate by local government officials.
- Ensure that small counties have the resources to effectively assess the impact of growth and development at the local level and in neighboring communities; and enable funding options for small counties to meet costs related to growth.
- Promote the capacity of the Regional Planning Councils to assist local governments with planning considerations as deemed necessary by the local government.

Permitting and Inspections

- Provide alternatives to existing requirements for rural county building inspectors and plan examiners that acknowledge differing skill sets needed amongst rural/urban certification.
- Oppose Performance Based Permitting Program.

Land Buying Programs

- Incorporate within PILT funding formula consideration of infrastructure needs and other impacts resulting from increased utilization of land purchased by state agencies. Incorporate within PILT funding formula consideration of infrastructure needs and other impacts resulting from increased utilization of land purchased by state agencies.
- **Conservation Easements** - Consider initiating a program of conservation easements and/or leases as an alternative to fee simple purchase within land acquisition programs thereby maintaining the revenue capacity of property secured by public agencies.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY PROPOSALS

The Small County Coalition supports:

- A clear rural job creation strategy within the state economic development job creation plan. This strategy should include - Legislative Flexibility and Regulatory Predictability; Organizational realignment of resources in support of rural job creation.; Identify and support Emerging Market Opportunities in rural areas; and, Protect Against Actions that impact local economic stability.
- The identification of High Value Opportunities for development within state rural initiatives.
- Establishing measureable performance standards to serve as benchmarks for evaluating effectiveness of economic development efforts in rural areas.
- Program changes that will help Florida's rural communities be more competitive with competing states.
- Allowing fiscally constrained counties or project site locations to be eligible for Enterprise Zone benefits in RAO regions.
- Establishing a Rural Economic Development fund to support high-value opportunities – support infrastructure and providing for funds for key Renovations and Restoration of important local venues.
- Ensuring collaboration and involvement of public and private interests on local Economic Development Councils.
- Establishing a clear goal for rural job growth.
- Protecting communities from decisions that would negatively impact the local economy in rural areas.
- Establishing clear performance measures for all economic development programs.
- Creating an inventory of “High Valued” opportunities in Florida's rural counties.
- Establishing a “Super Fund” to support rural projects – future and current.
- Expanding the Rural Enterprise Program to include all counties within a designated Rural Area of Opportunity.
- Enhancing marketing effort to promote increased visitation, tourism, and business opportunities in Florida rural areas. Florida's small counties are rich in water, forests, historical sites and unique cultural and recreational activities.
- Revision of rural infrastructure awards and qualifications to be more competitive with competing states
- Providing for targeted industry waivers in RAO regions (through the REDI structure and specific rural targeted industries).
- Increasing award amounts of the rural jobs tax credit to be more competitive with competing states
- Removing award amount restriction on QTI awards when local match is waived.
- Allowing project site locations to be considered an Enterprise Zone in RAO regions.

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

- REDI leadership should ensure that State Agency heads are familiar with the REDI process and that Agency REDI coordinators have access to and consult with Agency management on rural resource and policy issues.
- REDI leadership should ensure that all REDI Agencies are implementing the statutes that enable REDI counties to effectively compete and received sufficient support to facilitate local projects. Specifically pertaining to F.S. 288.019 – modifying evaluation criteria; F.S. 288.0656 – Assigning High level Staff to REDI and, F.S. 288.06561 – Providing Waiver of match policy that enables project effectiveness.
- REDI leadership should ensure that State Agencies provide technical assistance to small counties as needed to maximize administrative and financial support.
- REDI leadership should ensure that every REDI State Agency identify and document specific resources that are intended to or could be used to assist rural community development and implement technical assistance to ensure accessibility and resource delivery at the local level.

- Ensure that all existing “Grants and Resources” available to assist small counties are marketed by state agencies and used in a coordinated manner to ensure distribution and impact at the local level.
- REDI leadership should ensure that all agency programs that provide funding and services for local governments provide the necessary administrative assistance for small counties to access the state resources.
- REDI Agencies should promote flexibility and, if justified, waivers, in regulatory and administrative requirements that require additional local resources and increase local costs

Rural Areas Of Opportunity (RAO)

- The Small Count Coalition supports regional collaboration and communication through the RAO program.
- The Small County Coalition requests a strategic effort within the State Job Creation Plan to change the economic conditions within RAO designated counties sufficient to allow currently designated counties to become non-RAO.

CHANGES IN COUNTY MEDICAID COST-SHARE PAYMENT METHOD INCLUDED IN SENATE BILL 1520 PASSED IN THE 2013 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WILL BEGIN IMPACTING COUNTIES IN FY 2015-2016.

During the 2013 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 1520 modifying the method of calculating what each county is required to pay in the State County Medicaid Cost Share from a formula based on "Utilization" to a formula based on "Enrollment".

- Prior to SB 1520, the historical method of payment for counties has been based on the portion of the state total that is attributed to how much service is provided to county residents, a factor referred to as **Utilization**.
- SB 1520 changed the method of payment from how much each county pays for resident Utilization to county's % of residents who are enrolled in Medicaid, a factor that will be referred to as **Enrollment**.

What does the Change in Payment Method do?

- The change in payment method has a seven year implementation schedule that changes the County Cost Share formula from being 100% Utilization based to 100% Enrollment Based.
- In the first two years (FY13-14 and FY14-15), the county payment is based on the % of what the county utilization share has been of the state total plus a predetermined % increase. In FY13-14 - all counties will pay a 7.24% increase. In FY 14-15 - all counties will pay a 2.74% increase.
- In years 3-7 (FY15-16 through FY19-20) the number of " Medicaid enrollees" in the county is transitioned in as a factor for determining how much a county pays.
- Beginning in FY 15-16 - the impact of the shift skews the county cost share – with some counties receiving decreases (5.29% decrease in Pinellas) while other counties receive double digit increases (35% increase in Lafayette.)
- The broad range of decreases/increases hold throughout the years 3 to 7 of the program - while the formula shifts to "Enrollment."

Implementation Schedule Transitioning from Utilization to Enrollment

FY13-14 - County Shares Based 100% on Utilization and 0% on Medicaid Enrollees

FY14-15 - County Shares Based 100% on Utilization and 0% on Medicaid Enrollees

FY15-16 - County Shares Based 80% on Utilization and 20% on Medicaid Enrollees

FY16-17 - County Shares Based 60% on Utilization and 40% on Medicaid Enrollees

FY17-18 - County Shares Based 40% on Utilization and 60% on Medicaid Enrollees

FY18-19 - County Shares Based 20% on Utilization and 80% on Medicaid Enrollees

FY19-20 - County Shares Based 0% on Utilization and 100% on Medicaid Enrollees

The State Total of County Medicaid Cost Share is estimated to increase 24% by FY 19-20

Over the next seven years, from FY 12-13 to FY 19-20, the Statewide County Medicaid Cost Share total is estimated to increase 24%, increasing from \$251.4 million in FY 2012-13 to \$312.3 million in FY 19-20.

What is the impact of the change on each county over the seven year transition period?

- *5 counties will experience increase greater than 100% over what they have been paying.*
- *48 Counties will experience increases greater than the 24% of growth in the total program.*
- *19 Counties will experience an increase less than the 24% growth of the state total.*

**Counties Ranked Based on % of Projected Increase to % of Decrease of
Cost-share from FY 12-13 to FY 19-20.**

*The State Total of County Medicaid Cost Share is estimated to increase
24% by FY 19-20*

*Lafayette payment projected to increase 220.44%
Pinellas % projected to decrease 23.65%*

<u>COUNTIES WITH INCREASES ABOVE 24%</u>	
Lafayette County projected increase	220.44%
Hendry County projected increase	155.95%
Hardee County projected increase	152.93%
Madison County projected increase	108.95%
Bay County projected increase	101.70%
Holmes County projected increase	93.76%
Gadsden County projected increase	89.29%
Putnam County projected increase	83.30%
Indian River County projected increase	82.47%
Jackson County projected increase	81.57%
Washington County projected increase	76.45%
DeSoto County projected increase	75.21%
Hamilton County projected increase	74.53%
Baker County projected increase	73.84%
Taylor County projected increase	72.84%
Oseola County projected increase	72.66%
Okaloosa County projected increase	64.24%
Sumter County projected increase	63.33%
Wakulla County projected increase	62.23%
St. Lucie County projected increase	61.99%
Martin County projected increase	58.44%
Santa Rosa County projected increase	56.91%
Gilchrist County projected increase	56.08%
Nassau County projected increase	53.40%
Dixie County projected increase	50.58%
Highlands County projected increase	50.57%
Suwannee County projected increase	48.43%
Marion County projected increase	48.29%
Lee County projected increase	48.22%
Clay County projected increase	44.31%
Okeechobee County projected increase	47.40%
Leon County projected increase	41.87%
Volusia County projected increase	39.73%
Escambia County projected increase	38.18%
Calhoun County projected increase	37.11%
St. Johns County projected increase	36.68%
Collier County projected increase	36.24%
Hernando County projected increase	35.92%
Union County projected increase	33.30%
Flagler County projected increase	33.12%
Sarasota County projected increase	32.64%
Hillsborough County projected increase	30.76%
Charlotte County projected increase	30.67%
Walton County projected increase	28.71%
Citrus County projected increase	27.96%
Polk County projected increase	27.92%
Gulf County projected increase	26.97%
Levy County projected increase	26.55%
<u>COUNTIES WITH INCREASES BELOW 24%</u>	
Orange County projected increase	21.82%
Dade County projected increase	21.31%
Jefferson County projected increase	21.20%
Bradford County projected increase	19.81%
Duval County projected increase	19.08%
Lake County projected increase	19.05%
Pasco County projected increase	18.63%
Palm Beach County projected increase	18.6%
Liberty County projected increase	18.46%
Brevard County projected increase	15.46%
Manatee County projected increase	12%
Broward County projected increase	10.74%
Monroe County projected increase	5.97%
Seminole County projected increase	5.31%
Alachua County projected increase	1.61%
Columbia County projected increase	1.60%
Franklin County projected decrease	(7.26%)
Glades County projected decrease	(19.64%)
Pinellas County projected decrease	(23.65%)

**LEGISLATIVE FIX IS NEEDED IN 2015 SESSION TO MITIGATE THE
RANGE OF DISPARITY INHERENT IN THE SHIFT FROM “UTILIZATION
TO “ENROLLMENT”.**

Funding Issues Important to Small Counties
HB 5001 General Appropriations Act

Issue - Program Name	FY 13-14	Funding Approved in GAA for 2014-15
DOT - Small County Road Assistance	\$27,661,567	\$26,257,065
DOT - Small County Outreach Program	\$49,205,899	\$82,703,857 of which \$9,000,000 is appropriated for municipal projects pursuant to SB 218.
DOT - County Transportation Programs	\$74,924,146	\$48,839,574
DJJ - Fiscally Constrained – DJJ Offset	\$3,883,853	\$3,883,853
DOR - Fiscally Constrained – Conservation Easement	\$250,000	\$300,000
DOR-Fiscally Constrained–Amendment 1	\$23,750,000	\$23,200,000
FWC - Control of Invasive Plants	\$31, 823,647	\$34,823,647
DOS –Library Coop	\$1,500,000	\$2,000,000
DOS – Library State Aid Program	\$24,699,440	\$29,910,429
DOS – State Touring Program	Not Funded	\$200,000
DOR - Aerial Photography	\$400,000 - counties under 50,000	\$173,900 for counties under 50,000
DOR - Emergency Distribution	\$17,207,042	\$18,507,042
DOR– Supplemental Distribution	\$592,958	\$592,958
DEP - Payment In Lieu of Taxes	\$1,360,000	\$1,360,000
DOC – Payment In Lieu of Taxes	\$1,074,362	\$1,074,362
DEP–Small County Wastewater Trtmnt	\$23,301,810	\$21,000,000
DEP –Small County Solid Waste Grants	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
DEO - Regional Planning Councils	\$2,500,000 – VETOED	\$2,500,000 – VETOED
DACS - Mosquito Control	\$2,660,000	\$2,790,000 - \$1,130,000 designated for 3 specific initiatives.
DACS - Oyster Planting	\$350,000	\$8,148,183 - An additional 768,060 is allocated for Apalachicola Bay Oyster Processing facility upgrades
DACS - Rural Community Fire	\$72,589	\$72,589
DEM - Disaster Preparedness	\$5,856,802	\$5,926,144
DEM - Emergency Management	\$7,189,061	\$7,309,061
DEO - Rural Community Development	\$1,170,000	\$1,170,000
DEO - Rural Infrastructure	\$1,600,000/ \$1,600,000	\$1,600,000/ \$1,600,000
AHCA -Rural Health Services	\$144,606,418	\$155,016,956
DCF - Community Care for the Elderly	\$59,094,996	\$63,344,996
DOH - County Health Departments	\$970,496,674	\$981,352,188
DEO - Home Energy Assistance	\$84,063,764	\$84,063,764
DEO -Weatherization Grants	\$18,000,000	\$18,000,000
DEP –Drinking Water Revolving Loan	\$72,928,158	\$77,194,809
DEP –Land Acquisition	\$70,000,000- \$50M	\$40,000,000 funded by sale

	based on sale	of surplus land for Florida Forever; an additional \$10,000,000 provided to Water Mgt Districts for land acquisition
DEP - Springs Restoration		\$25,000,000 shall be placed in reserve until the department submits to the Legislative Budget Commission a project plan that includes, but is not limited to, a prioritization of springs projects that best represents all geographic regions of the state with an emphasis on equal spending between urban and agricultural areas to protect the quality and quantity of water that flows from springs.
DEP – Water Projects	\$59,475,000	\$88,505,684 for specific project list; Over 163 million in additional funding provided throughout the budget Everglades Restoration, Indian River Lagoon and Lake Okeechobee Basin Initiatives.
DEP – PARKS – FRDAP	\$642,000 Small Proj.	\$2,479,820 - Funds are provided for the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Priority List for Small Projects Fund - Development list.
DOT - Trans. Disadvantaged	\$50,887,853	\$50,898,510
DOT – Trans. Disadvantaged Medicaid	\$61,351,633	\$2,825,000
DMS –Wireless 911 to Counties	\$70,020,273	\$70,020,273
DMS - Wireless 911 - to Providers	\$15,484,846	\$15,484,846
DMS –Non-Wireless 911 to Counties	\$50,030,674	\$50,030,674
DEO - Affordable Housing		\$67,660,000
DEO - SHIP		\$100,000,000
Courthouse Projects in Small Counties		\$9,605,877 for the restoration or replacement of small county courthouses. Calhoun..... 200,000 Jefferson..... 200,000 Washington..... 9,205,877



Small County Coalition Officers for 2014-15

Chairperson – Commissioner Karson Turner, Hendry County
Vice-Chairperson – Commissioner Scarlet Frisina, Columbia County
Secretary – Cheryl Sanders, Franklin County
Past- Chairperson - Commissioner Warren Yeager, Gulf County

Executive Committee Members

Commissioner Sara Comander (Walton County)– 2015
Commissioner Ralph Thomas (Wakulla County) – 2016
Commissioner Ronnie Moore (Madison County) – 2015
Commissioner Chuck Lockey (Jackson County) – 2016
Commissioner Ron Williams (Columbia County) – 2015
Commissioner Danny Leeper (Nassau County) - 2016
Commissioner D. Ray Harrison (Gilchrist County) – 2015
Commissioner Patricia Patterson (Taylor) - 2016
Commissioner Buddy Mansfield (DeSoto County) – 2015
Commissioner Sue Birge (Hardee County) – 2016

Small County Coalition Members

<i>Baker County Commission</i>	<i>Gulf County Commission</i>	<i>Martin County Commission</i>
<i>Bradford County Commission</i>	<i>Hamilton County Commission</i>	<i>Monroe County Commission</i>
<i>Calhoun County Commission</i>	<i>Hardee County Commission</i>	<i>Nassau County Commission</i>
<i>Citrus County Commission</i>	<i>Hendry County Commission</i>	<i>Okeechobee County Commission</i>
<i>Clay County Commission</i>	<i>Highlands County Commission</i>	<i>Putnam County Commission</i>
<i>Columbia County Commission</i>	<i>Holmes County Commission</i>	<i>Santa Rosa County Commission</i>
<i>Dixie County Commission</i>	<i>Jackson County Commission</i>	<i>Suwannee County Commission</i>
<i>DeSoto County Commission</i>	<i>Jefferson County Commission</i>	<i>Taylor County Commission</i>
<i>Flagler County Commission</i>	<i>Lafayette County Commission</i>	<i>Union County Commission</i>
<i>Franklin County Commission</i>	<i>Levy County Commission</i>	<i>Wakulla County Commission</i>
<i>Gadsden County Commission</i>	<i>Liberty County Commission</i>	<i>Walton County Commission</i>
<i>Gilchrist County Commission</i>	<i>Madison County Commission</i>	<i>Washington County Commission</i>
<i>Glades County Commission</i>		

Coalition Consultants

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