

Statutory Designations

"Rural community" as defined in 288.0656 means:

1. A county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
2. A county with a population of 125,000 or fewer which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.
4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or fewer and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in paragraph (c) and verified by the department.

"Rural area of critical economic concern" as defined in 288.0656 means:

A rural community, or a region composed of rural communities, designated by the Governor, that has been adversely affected by an extraordinary economic event, severe or chronic distress, or a natural disaster or that presents a unique economic development opportunity of regional impact. The Governor by executive order designates up to three RACECs.

Fiscally Constrained County as defined in 218.67(1) means:

A county that is entirely within a rural area of critical economic concern as designated by the Governor pursuant to s. 288.0656 or a county for which the value of a mill will raise no more than \$5 million in revenue, based on the taxable value certified pursuant to s. 1011.62(4)(a)1.a., from the previous July 1, shall be considered a fiscally constrained county.

Small County as defined in Small County Outreach Program 339.2818(2) means: —

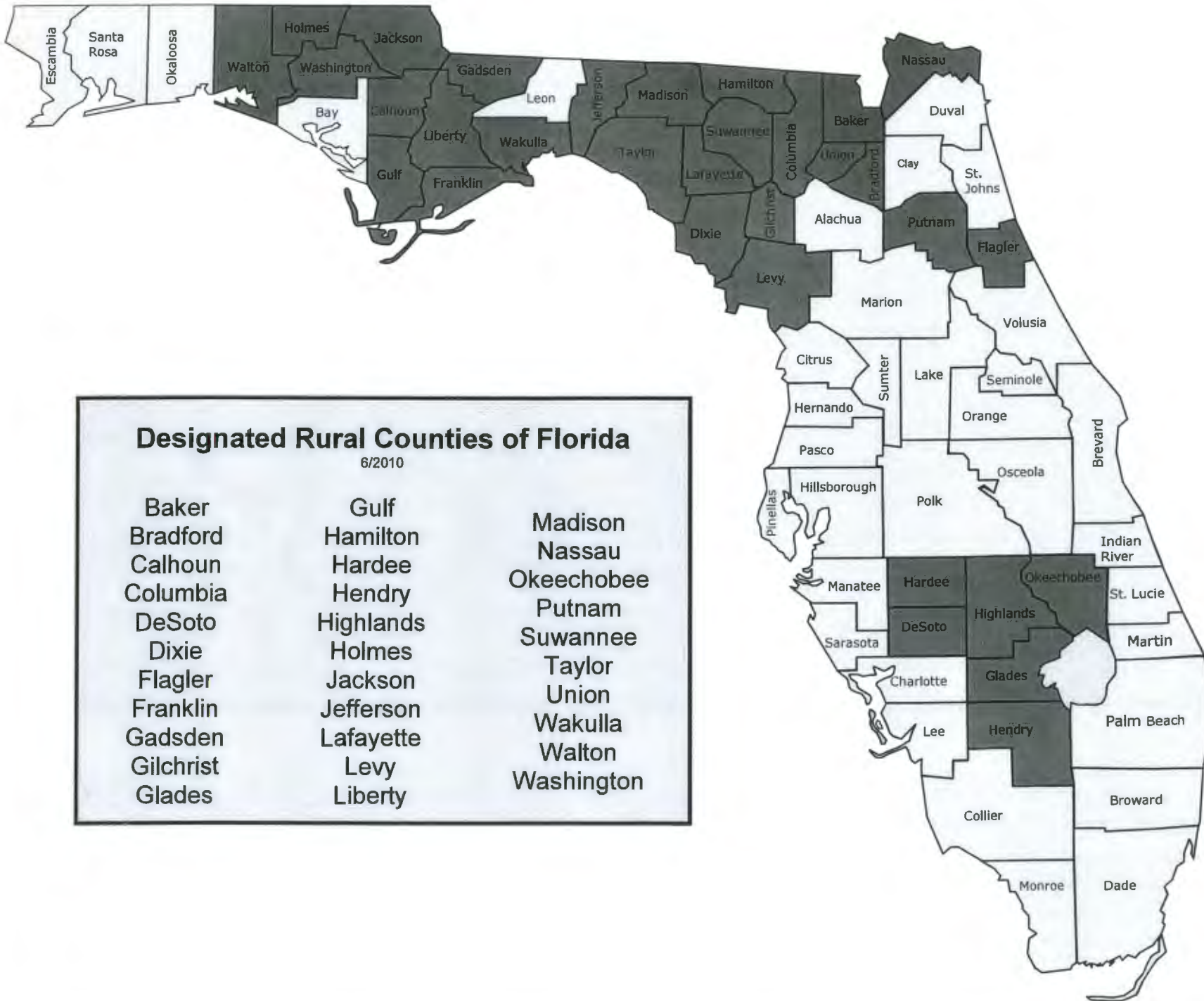
For the purposes of this section, the term "small county" means any county that has a population of 150,000 or less as determined by the most recent official estimate pursuant to s. 186.901.

Small County as defined in Small County Road Assistance Program 339.2816(2):

For the purposes of this section, the term "small county" means any county that has a population of 75,000 or less according to 1990 federal census data.

Local government solid waste responsibilities - 403.706(4)(c): A county with a population of 100,000 or less may provide its residents with the opportunity to recycle in lieu of achieving the goal set forth in this section. For the purposes of this section, the "opportunity to recycle" means that the county:

- 1.a. Provides a system for separating and collecting recyclable materials prior to disposal that is located at a solid waste management facility or solid waste disposal area; or
- b. Provides a system of places within the county for collection of source-separated recyclable materials.
2. Provides a public education and promotion program that is conducted to inform its residents of the opportunity to recycle, encourages source separation of recyclable materials, and promotes the benefits of reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting materials.

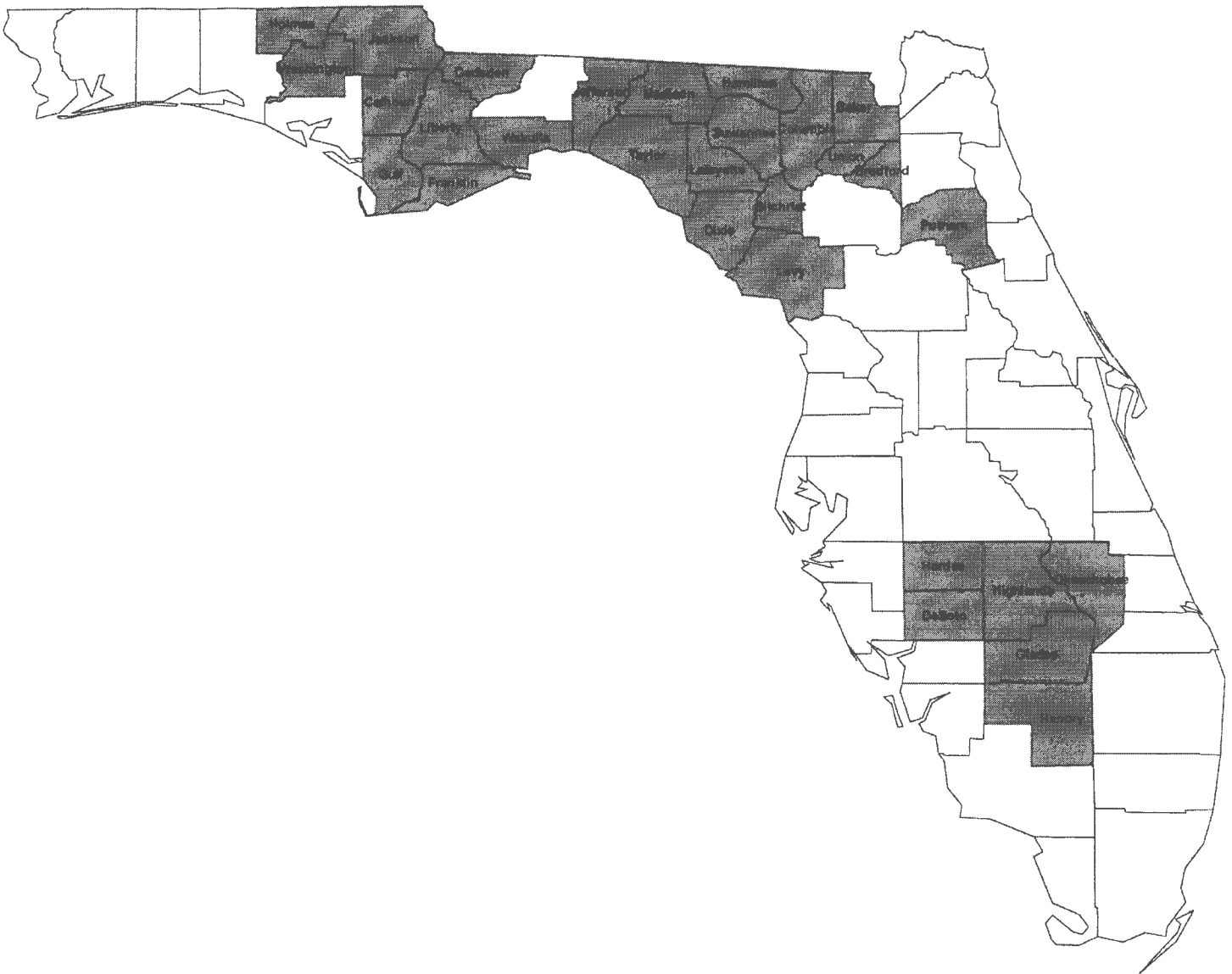


Designated Rural Counties of Florida

6/2010

Baker	Gulf	Madison
Bradford	Hamilton	Nassau
Calhoun	Hardee	Okeechobee
Columbia	Hendry	Putnam
DeSoto	Highlands	Suwannee
Dixie	Holmes	Taylor
Flagler	Jackson	Union
Franklin	Jefferson	Wakulla
Gadsden	Lafayette	Walton
Gilchrist	Levy	Washington
Glades	Liberty	

FISCALLY CONSTRAINED COUNTIES



Source: Property Tax Oversight, DOR

Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern

Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) are defined as rural communities, or a region composed of rural communities, that have been adversely affected by extraordinary economic events or natural disasters. The Governor by executive order designates up to three RACECs, which establishes each region as a priority assignment for REDI agencies and allows the Governor to waive criteria of any economic development incentive including, but not limited to: the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program under section 288.106 F.S., the Quick Response Training Program and the Quick Response Training Program for participants in the welfare transition program under section 288.047 F.S., transportation projects under section 288.063 F.S., the brownfield redevelopment bonus refund under section 288.107 F.S., and the rural job tax credit program under section 212.098 F.S. and section 220.1895 F.S.

Florida's Designated RACECs

Northwest Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (Opportunity Florida):

Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Wakulla, and Washington counties, and the City of Freeport in Walton County.

Year	Designation	Executive Order	Signed	Expiration	Additions
1999	Original	<u>99-275</u>	11/8/99	11/8/04	
2004	Re-designated	<u>04-250</u>	12/6/04	12/6/09	*Freeport added
2010	Re-designated	<u>10-22</u>	1/25/10	1/8/15	
2011	10-22 Amended	<u>11-103</u>	5/5/11	1/8/15	**Wakulla added

South Central Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (Florida's Heartland REDI, Inc.):

DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties, and the cities of Pahokee, Belle Glade, and South Bay (Palm Beach County), and Immokalee (Collier County).

Year	Designation	Executive Order	Signed	Expiration	Additions
2001	Original	<u>01-26</u>	1/26/01	1/26/06	
2006	Re-designated	<u>06-34</u>	2/16/06	2/16/11	
2011	Re-designated	<u>11-81</u>	4/22/11	4/22/16	

North Central Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (North Florida Economic Development Partnership):

Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Putnam, Suwannee, Taylor, and Union counties

Year	Designation	Executive Order	Signed	Expiration	Additions
2003	Original	<u>03-74</u>	4/23/03	4/23/08	
2008	Re-designated	<u>08-132</u>	6/11/08	6/11/13	

Ch. 288 » Sec. 288.0656

288.0656 Rural Economic Development Initiative.—

(1)(a) Recognizing that rural communities and regions continue to face extraordinary challenges in their efforts to significantly improve their economies, specifically in terms of personal income, job creation, average wages, and strong tax bases, it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage and facilitate the location and expansion of major economic development projects of significant scale in such rural communities.

(b) The Rural Economic Development Initiative, known as "REDI," is created within the department, and the participation of state and regional agencies in this initiative is authorized.

(2) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Catalyst project" means a business locating or expanding in a rural area of critical economic concern to serve as an economic generator of regional significance for the growth of a regional target industry cluster. The project must provide capital investment on a scale significant enough to affect the entire region and result in the development of high-wage and high-skill jobs.

(b) "Catalyst site" means a parcel or parcels of land within a rural area of critical economic concern that has been prioritized as a geographic site for economic development through partnerships with state, regional, and local organizations. The site must be reviewed by REDI and approved by the department for the purposes of locating a catalyst project.

(c) "Economic distress" means conditions affecting the fiscal and economic viability of a rural community, including such factors as low per capita income, low per capita taxable values, high unemployment, high underemployment, low weekly earned wages compared to the state average, low housing values compared to the state average, high percentages of the population receiving public assistance, high poverty levels compared to the state average, and a lack of year-round stable employment opportunities.

(d) "Rural area of critical economic concern" means a rural community, or a region composed of rural communities, designated by the Governor, that has been adversely affected by an extraordinary economic event, severe or chronic distress, or a natural disaster or that presents a unique economic development opportunity of regional impact.

(e) "Rural community" means:

1. A county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
2. A county with a population of 125,000 or fewer which is contiguous to a county with a population of 75,000 or fewer.
3. A municipality within a county described in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2.
4. An unincorporated federal enterprise community or an incorporated rural city with a population of 25,000 or fewer and an employment base focused on traditional agricultural or resource-based industries, located in a county not defined as rural, which has at least three or more of the economic distress factors identified in paragraph (c) and verified by the department.

For purposes of this paragraph, population shall be determined in accordance with the most recent official estimate pursuant to s. 186.901.

(3) REDI shall be responsible for coordinating and focusing the efforts and resources of state and regional agencies on the problems which affect the fiscal, economic, and community viability of Florida's economically distressed rural communities, working with local governments, community-based organizations, and private organizations that have an interest in the growth and development of these communities to find ways to balance environmental and growth management issues with local needs.

(4) REDI shall review and evaluate the impact of statutes and rules on rural communities and shall work to minimize any adverse impact and undertake outreach and capacity-building efforts.

(5) REDI shall facilitate better access to state resources by promoting direct access and referrals to appropriate state and regional agencies and statewide organizations. REDI may undertake outreach, capacity-building, and other advocacy efforts to improve conditions in rural communities. These activities may include sponsorship of conferences and achievement awards.

(6)(a) By August 1 of each year, the head of each of the following agencies and organizations shall designate a deputy secretary or higher-level staff person from within the agency or organization to serve as the REDI representative for the agency or organization:

1. The Department of Transportation.
2. The Department of Environmental Protection.
3. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
4. The Department of State.
5. The Department of Health.
6. The Department of Children and Family Services.
7. The Department of Corrections.
8. The Department of Education.
9. The Department of Juvenile Justice.
10. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
11. Each water management district.
12. Enterprise Florida, Inc.
13. Workforce Florida, Inc.
14. VISIT Florida.
15. The Florida Regional Planning Council Association.

16. The Agency for Health Care Administration.
17. The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS).

An alternate for each designee shall also be chosen, and the names of the designees and alternates shall be sent to the executive director of the department.

(b) Each REDI representative must have comprehensive knowledge of his or her agency's functions, both regulatory and service in nature, and of the state's economic goals, policies, and programs. This person shall be the primary point of contact for his or her agency with REDI on issues and projects relating to economically distressed rural communities and with regard to expediting project review, shall ensure a prompt effective response to problems arising with regard to rural issues, and shall work closely with the other REDI representatives in the identification of opportunities for preferential awards of program funds and allowances and waiver of program requirements when necessary to encourage and facilitate long-term private capital investment and job creation.

(c) The REDI representatives shall work with REDI in the review and evaluation of statutes and rules for adverse impact on rural communities and the development of alternative proposals to mitigate that impact.

(d) Each REDI representative shall be responsible for ensuring that each district office or facility of his or her agency is informed about the Rural Economic Development Initiative and for providing assistance throughout the agency in the implementation of REDI activities.

(7)(a) REDI may recommend to the Governor up to three rural areas of critical economic concern. The Governor may by executive order designate up to three rural areas of critical economic concern which will establish these areas as priority assignments for REDI as well as to allow the Governor, acting through REDI, to waive criteria, requirements, or similar provisions of any economic development incentive. Such incentives shall include, but not be limited to: the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program under s. 288.106, the Quick Response Training Program under s. 288.047, the Quick Response Training Program for participants in the welfare transition program under s. 288.047(8), transportation projects under s. 288.063, the brownfield redevelopment bonus refund under s. 288.107, and the rural job tax credit program under ss. 212.098 and 220.1895.

(b) Designation as a rural area of critical economic concern under this subsection shall be contingent upon the execution of a memorandum of agreement among the department; the governing body of the county; and the governing bodies of any municipalities to be included within a rural area of critical economic concern. Such agreement shall specify the terms and conditions of the designation, including, but not limited to, the duties and responsibilities of the county and any participating municipalities to take actions designed to facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses in the area, as well as the recruitment of new businesses to the area.

(c) Each rural area of critical economic concern may designate catalyst projects, provided that each catalyst project is specifically recommended by REDI, identified as a catalyst project by Enterprise Florida, Inc., and confirmed as a catalyst project by the department. All state agencies and departments shall use all available tools and resources to the extent permissible by law to promote the creation and development of each catalyst project and the development of catalyst sites.

(8) REDI shall submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives each year on or before September 1 on all REDI activities for the prior fiscal year. This report shall include a status report on all projects currently being coordinated through REDI, the number of preferential awards and allowances made pursuant to this section, the dollar amount of such awards, and the names of the recipients. The report shall also include a description of all waivers of program requirements granted. The report shall also include information as to the economic impact of the projects coordinated by REDI, and recommendations based on the review and evaluation of statutes and rules having an adverse impact on rural communities, and proposals to mitigate such adverse impacts.

History.—s. 97, ch. 99-251; s. 79, ch. 2000-165; s. 12, ch. 2001-201; s. 13, ch. 2009-51; s. 51, ch. 2010-5; s. 143, ch. 2011-142.