

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**SESSION 1997**

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**SENATE BILL 788**

Short Title: Rural Economic Dev. Funds.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Senators Jenkins; Albertson, Ballance, Conder, Hoyle, Jordan, Kerr, Martin of Pitt, Perdue, Plyler, Rand, Shaw of Cumberland, Soles, Warren, Weinstein, and Wellons.

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Referred to: Appropriations.

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April 10, 1997

**A BILL TO BE ENTITLED**

**AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC., FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED AREAS IN THE STATE.**

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Rural Economic Development Center, Inc., the sum of four million five hundred thousand (\$4,500,000) for the 1997-98 fiscal year to be used to assist economically depressed areas in securing water and sewer infrastructure improvements. These funds shall be made available to units of local government and nonprofit corporations as needed in accordance with funding criteria set out in this legislation. Funding of individual projects will provide economic stimulus to economically depressed.

Section 2. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Rural Economic Development Center, Inc., the sum of five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for the 1997-98 fiscal year to be used to provide planning assistance to economically depressed areas enabling these jurisdictions to secure the assistance required to produce effective planning and writing of competitive grant and other funding request applications. The Center will establish standards for determining each local government's needs and shall make these grants on the basis of need.

1 Section 3. (a) For the purposes of this act, the following definitions apply:

2 (1) "Economically depressed area" means any of the following:

3 a. A county that the Secretary of Commerce has designated one of  
4 the most economically distressed counties in the State pursuant to  
5 G.S. 143B-347A.

6 b. That part of a rural county where the poverty rate is at least one  
7 hundred fifty percent (150%) of the State poverty rate. For the  
8 purpose of this subsection, the poverty rate is the percentage of  
9 the population with incomes below the latest annual federal  
10 poverty guideline issued by the United States Department of  
11 Health and Human Services.

12 c. That part of a rural county where the rate of unemployment is at  
13 least double the State rate of unemployment.

14 d. That part of a rural county that experienced an actual or  
15 imminent loss of jobs in a number that is equal to or exceeds five  
16 percent (5%) of the total number of jobs in that part.

17 (2) "Rural county" means any county other than the following: Buncombe,  
18 Catawba, Gaston, Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Rowan, Davidson, Forsyth,  
19 Guilford, Alamance, Orange, Durham, Wake, Cumberland, and New  
20 Hanover.

21 (b) The Rural Economic Development Center, Inc., shall report quarterly to the  
22 Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations on the use of funds allocated  
23 in this act and on the outcomes of the program.

24 Section 4. This act becomes effective July 1, 1997.