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## DIGEST

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HB 622 Reengrossed

2021 Regular Session

Thompson

**Abstract:** Expands the state office of rural development and creates the "Rural Development Fund" and program.

Present law creates the office of rural development within the office of the governor and provides for the powers and authorities of the office and executive director.

Proposed law retains present law and adds "broadband connectivity" and "water quality and sewer treatment" as policy areas considered to be a part of rural development and revitalization.

Proposed law defines "regional planning commission districts" as the eight regional planning commissions created pursuant to present law. Also modifies the definition of "rural development and revitalization" to include broadband connectivity, water quality, and sewer treatment.

Present law specifies that the head of the office of rural development is a director appointed by the governor. Further specifies that the director can employ necessary staff to carry out the duties and functions of the office.

Proposed law retains present law and requires the director to hire eight new regional directors to be placed in each of the regional planning districts of the state as outlined in present law. Proposed law requires each applicant for regional director to reside in the district for which he seeks to be employed and requires each regional director to remain a resident of the district he is employed in for the entirety of the employment.

Proposed law reestablishes previously repealed law to create the "Rural Development Fund" and "Rural Development Program" for the purpose of mitigating the rapid deterioration of rural health, education, infrastructure, and other systems essential to the socioeconomic well-being of the state's rural population.

Proposed law provides for permissible sources of monies to deposit into the fund and guidelines for administering the funds and program.

(Amends R.S. 3:12(4) and (5), 313(8)-(10), and 314(B); Adds R.S. 3:313(11) and 321-323)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development to the original bill:

1. Change "water quality and treatment" to "water quality and sewer treatment" as policy areas considered to be part of rural development and revitalization.
2. Define the term "regional planning commission districts".
3. Modify the definition of "rural development and revitalization" to include sewer treatment.
4. Add a requirement for the director to hire eight new regional directors to be placed in each of the regional planning districts of the state as outlined in present law.
5. Make technical changes.

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Require that each applicant for the position of regional director reside in the district which he seeks employment and require any person hired as a regional director to remain a resident of the district in which he is employed for the entire length of employment.
2. Make technical changes.