

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 736 (SB 80)

2026 Regular Session

Mizell

Existing law provides relative to the office of broadband development and connectivity.

Prior law provided that the office may use up to 1% of the appropriated funds to administer the GUMBO program. Provided that the office may use an additional 1% of the appropriated funds to hire third-party contractors as deemed necessary for the further administration of the GUMBO program and provides that the additional 1% percent shall not be used as compensation for any new or existing positions within the office.

New law increases the amount the office may use to administer the GUMBO 1.0 program from 1% to 2.5%.

New law also increases the amount the office may use to hire third-party contractors as deemed necessary for the further administration of the GUMBO 1.0 program from 1% to 2.5%.

Existing law creates the GUMBO 2.0 program, provides relative to for reimbursement for grantees, and provides that, except as provided in existing law, the next 10% of the GUMBO 2.0 subgrant award, after the initial 10%, shall be provided based on provider certification and the office's verification that 10% of the eligible locations have been reached. Provides that the remaining disbursements shall be given at the thresholds of completion of 35%, 60%, 85%, and 100%.

New law retains existing law and authorizes the office to withhold only the final payment owed to a provider for GUMBO 2.0 projects, and only in an amount equal to the unpaid portion of a final judgment for damage to underground utilities or facilities. New law applies only after a court of competent jurisdiction issues a final, non-appealable judgment determining that the provider is legally at fault for the damage and the provider has failed to timely satisfy the judgement.

New law authorizes the office to require documentation related to repairs, reimbursement of damages, corrective action plans, utility coordination records, locate requests, or other compliance measures, before releasing withheld funds. Provides that evidence gathered during the administrative process, and any finding made by the office, shall not be admissible as evidence in any court of law.

New law prohibits the office from withholding any progress payment or interim disbursement. Authorizes the office to withhold only the final disbursement or closeout payment of a GUMBO 2.0 grant, and only if the withholding is authorized by rules promulgated in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act after completion of the regular notice, public comment, and legislative oversight process. Requires the rules to provide notice to the grantee, a statement of the grounds for withholding, and an opportunity for the grantee to cure or respond before final agency action. Prohibits the office from using emergency rulemaking to implement these provisions.

Existing law creates the GUMBO 3.0 program.

New law provides for grants administered under the GUMBO 3.0 program and clarifies that the rules for GUMBO 3.0 will be promulgated after the NTIA releases non-deployment guidance.

Prior law created GUMBO 4.0 program. New law repeals prior law that created GUMBO 4.0 program.

Effective August 1, 2026.

(Amends R.S. 51:2370.13, 2370.32(B), and 2370.41; repeals R.S. 51:2370.51)