A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ALLOW RURAL CENSUS TRACTS OF TIER THREE COUNTIES TO BE
ELIGIBLE FOR UTILITY ACCOUNT FUNDS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 143B-437.01 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143B-437.01. Industrial Development Fund Utility Account.

(a) Creation and Purpose of Fund. – There is created in the Department of Commerce a
special account to be known as the Industrial Development Fund Utility Account ("Utility
Account") to provide funds to assist the local government units of the most economically
distressed counties in the State in creating jobs. The Department of Commerce shall adopt rules
providing for the administration of the program. Those rules shall include the following
provisions, which shall apply to each grant from the account:

(1) The funds shall be used for construction of or improvements to new or existing
water, sewer, gas, telecommunications, high-speed broadband, electrical
utility distribution lines or equipment, or transportation infrastructure for
existing or new or proposed buildings. To be eligible for funding, the water,
gas, telecommunications, high-speed broadband, electrical utility lines or
facilities, or transportation infrastructure shall be located on the site of the
building or, if not located on the site, shall be directly related to the operation
of the job creation activity. To be eligible for funding, the sewer infrastructure
shall be located on the site of the building or, if not located on the site, shall
be directly related to the operation of the job creation activity, even if the
sewer infrastructure is located in a county other than the county in which the
building is located.

(1a) The funds shall be used for projects located in economically distressed
counties except that the Secretary of Commerce may use up to one hundred
thousand dollars ($100,000) to provide emergency economic development
assistance in any county that is documented to be experiencing a major
economic dislocation.

(2) The funds shall be used by the city and county governments for projects that
are reasonably anticipated to result in the creation of new jobs. There shall be
no maximum funding amount per new job to be created or per project.

(3) There shall be no local match requirement if the project is located in a county
that has one of the 25 highest rankings under G.S. 143B-437.08.

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The funds shall not be used for any retail, entertainment, or sports projects.

The funds shall not be used for any nonmanufacturing project that does not meet the wage standard for the development tier area or zone in which the project is located. There is no wage standard for a development tier one area. If an urban progress zone or an agrarian growth zone is not in a development tier one area, then the wage standard for that zone is an average weekly wage that is at least equal to ninety percent (90%) of the lesser of the average wage for all insured private employers in the State and the average wage for all insured private employers in the county in which the project is located. The wage standard for a development tier two area or a development tier three area is an average weekly wage that is at least equal to one hundred ten percent (110%) of the lesser of the average wage for all insured private employers in the State and ninety percent (90%) of the average wage for all insured private employers in the county in which the project is located.

Priority for the use of funds shall be given to eligible industries.

(a1) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

(4) Economically distressed county. – A county that is defined as a development tier one or two area has one of the 87 highest rankings under G.S. 143B-437.08.

(7) Major economic dislocation. – The actual or imminent loss of 500 or more manufacturing jobs in the county or of a number of manufacturing jobs equal to at least ten percent (10%) of the existing manufacturing workforce in the county.

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.