



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

## FISCAL NOTE

SENATE BILL NO. 277

PRINTER'S NO. 1589

PRIME SPONSOR: Yaw

### COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2023/24	FY 2024/25
General Fund	\$0	\$133,500

**SUMMARY:** SB 277 PN 1589 restructures the board of directors of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania and establishes the Rural Population Revitalization Commission. Language effectuating the establishment of the Commission, within Chapter 4, will take effect in 180 days and restructuring of the board of directors, in Section 302, will take effect immediately.

**ANALYSIS:** This legislation amends the Rural Pennsylvania Revitalization Act (Act 16 of 1987) by restructuring the board of directors of the Center of Rural Pennsylvania within Section 302 and by creating a new Chapter 4 to establish the Rural Pennsylvania Revitalization Commission.

Changes within Section 302, pertaining to restructuring the board of directors of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, include:

- Removal of the member from the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development;
- Addition of a member from the Penn State Ag Extension;
- Addition of a member from the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College; and
- Addition of a member from the Pennsylvania College of Technology;

Furthermore, the Rural Pennsylvania Revitalization Commission is established under new Chapter 4.

### Powers and Duties of the Commission

The Rural Population Revitalization Commission:

- Shall issue biennial reports on population change in rural areas, at minimum including:
  - Increasing participation in the Federal decennial census
  - Attracting and retaining residents in rural Pennsylvania
  - Education and career opportunities
  - Access to health care and social services
  - Issues facing rural Pennsylvania
  - Grant awards and tax credit opportunities for rural residents
  - Statutory and regulatory costs and impacts on rural governments, businesses, and communities
- Additional powers and duties
  - Convene meetings, make findings, and recommendations to address and mitigate rural population decline
  - Hold public hearings
  - Review rural development strategies
  - Create and maintain a database on rural demographic conditions and trends
  - Determine fiscal impact of rural population changes on local governments

## **Commission Members**

- Commission shall be composed of 17 members:
  - Three individuals appointed by the Governor, including one from PASSHE
  - Two Senators appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate
  - Two House Members appointed by the Speaker of the House, one from each party
  - Director of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania or designee
  - A person selected by stakeholder group representing the interest of legal immigrants in rural communities
  - A representative from the Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health
  - A young adult selected from FFA
  - A representative from the County Commissioners Association who holds office in rural county
  - A representative from the County Commissioners Association of PA's Human Services Committee
  - A representative from the PA School Board's Associations from a rural school district
  - A member of the PA Chamber who resides in or operates a rural business
  - The Executive Director or designee of the Rural Development Council
  - A certified community health worker, selected by PA Community Health Worker Collaborative
- Members shall serve without compensation, except for reasonable expenses related to their duties

Lastly, the bill repeals Section 311 (relating to Center for Rural PA) within the Administrative Code (Act 175 of 1929), and adds two members, one from The Northern Pennsylvania Regional College and one member from the Pennsylvania College of Technology, within Section 302(a)(7) and (8) of the Rural Pennsylvania Revitalization Act (Act 16 of 1987).

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The enactment of this legislation could have a fiscal impact on Commonwealth funds, specifically the General Fund. To determine the fiscal impact, we need to consider the changes that occur under Section 302 along with the establishment of the Rural Population Revitalization Commission, under Chapter 4. In both circumstances we need to consider the Board or the Commission's make up, number of meetings per year, the reimbursement rates related to travel and lodging, and the possible need for additional personnel by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

### **Section 302**

Relating to the Board of Directors (Section 302) of the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, as provided by the legislation the board consists of (13) members. Regarding reimbursement costs, the total number of directors can be divided into two groups. One group, consisting of members who are state or legislative members (12) and second group consisting of (1) member appointed by Penn State Extension.

For state members travel and lodging costs would be absorbed by their respective state agency. Similarly, for legislative members, their costs would be absorbed by their respective caucuses.

Costs related to the second group, the one member appointed from Penn State Extension, would have a fiscal impact. As such, we need to consider the following components:

- Reimbursement per mile - \$0.67 with assumed Average Distance of 200 miles traveled
- Lodging cost per meeting - \$98
- Subsistence cost per day - \$59
- Number of meetings/events - four meetings per year, plus two off-site legislative hearings

Utilizing the reimbursement rates, the number of directors to which such rates apply, and the number of meetings per year, it is estimated that the annual costs for the Center for Rural Pennsylvania would be less than \$2,500.

## **Chapter 4**

The Rural Population Revitalization Commission would consist of 17 appointees. Regarding reimbursement costs, the total number of appointees can be divided into two groups. One group, consisting of appointees who are state or legislative members (11) and second group consisting of members (6) appointed by stakeholder groups.

For state members travel and lodging costs would be absorbed by their respective state agency. Similarly, for legislative members, their costs would be absorbed by their respective caucuses.

Costs related to the second group, six (6) non-governmental appointees, would have a fiscal impact. As such we need to consider the following components:

- Reimbursement per mile - \$0.67 with assumed Average Distance of 200 miles traveled
- Lodging cost per meeting - \$98
- Subsistence cost per day - \$59
- Number of meetings/events - four meetings per year, plus two off-site legislative hearings

Utilizing the reimbursement rates, the number of directors to which such rates apply, and the number of meetings per year, it is estimated that the annual costs for the Center for Rural Pennsylvania would be less than \$12,000 per fiscal year.

Lastly, we also have to consider that the Center for Rural Pennsylvania needs to produce a biennial report and provide staffing as needed for the newly created Commission. As such, it is likely that it needs to hire one Policy Analyst to fulfill those responsibilities. Annual costs for one Policy Analyst would total approximately \$119,000, including salary and benefits.

In total, the projected fiscal impact of the legislation would be approximately \$133,500 per year.

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**DATE:** May 8, 2024

*Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.*