AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 480

To establish the Office of Regional Economic Adjustment in the Department of Commerce, to assist regions affected by sudden and severe economic dislocation by coordinating Federal, State, and local resources for economic adjustment and by providing technical assistance, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 25, 2009

Mr. BROWN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

---

A BILL

To establish the Office of Regional Economic Adjustment in the Department of Commerce, to assist regions affected by sudden and severe economic dislocation by coordinating Federal, State, and local resources for economic adjustment and by providing technical assistance, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Regional Economic Recovery Coordination Act of 2009''.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to assist eligible regions affected by sudden and severe economic dislocation by—

(1) identifying and coordinating Federal, State, and local economic development resources;

(2) providing technical assistance in support of regional economic development strategies; and

(3) integrating public and private economic development strategies for such regions.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the Office of Regional Economic Adjustment appointed under section 4(b).

(2) ELIGIBLE REGION.—The term ''eligible region'' means a region that—

(A) has been certified by the Director under section 5(a); and

(B) has established a Regional Economic and Workforce Development Coordinating Committee under section 6(a).

(3) MASS LAYOFF.—The term ''mass layoff'' has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (29 U.S.C. 2101).

(4) OFFICE.—The term ''Office'' means the Office of Regional Economic Adjustment established under section 4(a).

(5) PLANT CLOSING.—The term ''plant closing'' has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (29 U.S.C. 2101).

(6) RURAL COMMUNITY.—The term ''rural community'' means a community that has a rural-urban continuum code of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9, as defined by the Economic Research Service of the Department of Agriculture.

(7) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of Commerce.

(8) SUDDEN AND SEVERE ECONOMIC DISLOCATION.—The term ''sudden and severe economic dislocation'' has the same meaning as such term when used in section 209(a) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3149).

(9) URBAN COMMUNITY.—The term ''urban community'' means a community that has a rural-urban continuum code of 1, 2, or 3, as defined by the Economic Research Service of the Department of Agriculture.

SEC. 4. OFFICE OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department of Commerce an office to be known as the ''Office of Regional Economic Adjustment''.

(b) DIRECTOR.—The Director of the Office of Regional Economic Adjustment shall be the head of the Office. The Director shall be appointed by the Secretary from among individuals qualified to perform the duties of the position.

(c) PERSONNEL.—The Office shall have such staff as may be necessary to carry out the functions described in subsection (d).

(d) FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the Office are as follows:

(1) To provide leadership, support, and coordination for a comprehensive management program to address economic dislocation in eligible regions.

(2) To assist the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development in making the central information clearinghouse maintained under section 502(1) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3192(1)) readily accessible to States and eligible regions so that such States and regions can easily obtain information regarding economic adjustment assistance available to them under Federal law.

(3) To coordinate the Federal response to eligible regions undergoing sudden and severe economic dislocation by—

(A) identifying all Federal, State, and local resources that are available to assist such regions in recovering from sudden and severe economic dislocation;

(B) ensuring that all Federal agencies offering economic adjustment assistance to such regions do so in a targeted, integrated manner that ensures that officials of such regions are aware of all available Federal assistance for the economic adjustment of such regions;

(C) ensuring timely consultation and cooperation between Federal, State, and regional officials concerning economic adjustment for such regions;

(D) identifying and strengthening existing agency mechanisms designed to assist such regions in economic adjustment and workforce redeployment;

(E) applying, to the extent practicable, consistent policies, practices, and procedures in the administration of Federal programs that

are used to assist with the economic adjustment of such regions;

(F) creating, maintaining, and using a uniform economic database to analyze regional economic adjustment activities; and

(G) upon request by an eligible region, assigning a Federal economic recovery coordinator to work with the region in accordance with section 7.

(4) To provide comprehensive technical assistance to any eligible region seeking to—

(A) identify serious economic problems in such region that result from a sudden and severe economic dislocation;

(B) integrate the major groups and organizations significantly affected by the economic adjustment of such region;

(C) access Federal, State, and local resources designed to assist in the economic adjustment and workforce development of such region;

(D) explore layoff aversion strategies, including employee ownership and alternate financing; and

(E) diversify and strengthen the economy of the region.

(5) To establish an interagency regional economic adjustment working group, consisting of the representatives of any Federal department or agency with responsibility for economic adjustment or workforce development, including representatives of the following:

(A) The Department of Agriculture.

(B) The Department of Defense.

(C) The Department of Education.

(D) The Department of Labor.

(E) The Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(F) The Department of Health and Human Services.

(G) The Small Business Administration.

(H) The Department of the Treasury.

(I) The Department of Commerce.

(J) The National Economic Council.

SEC. 5. NOTIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION.

(a) CERTIFICATION.—Not later than 15 days after the Secretary receives a notice under section 3(e) of the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (29 U.S.C. 2102(e)) with respect to a plant closing or mass

layoff, the Director shall certify for purposes of this Act the region in which the plant closing or mass layoff is located if 1 or more of the following conditions apply:

(1) NUMBER OF JOB LOSSES.—

(A) URBAN COMMUNITY.—In the case that the region is comprised of an urban community, not fewer than 500 individuals employed in such community have received written notices under section 3 of the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (29 U.S.C. 2102) in the most recent 6-month period for which data are available.

(B) RURAL COMMUNITY.—In the case that the region is comprised of a rural community, not fewer than 300 individuals employed in such community have received such written notices in the most recent 6-month period for which data are available.

(2) PERCENT OF WORKFORCE UNEMPLOYED.—The unemployment rate for the region is not less than 1 percent greater than the national unemployment rate for the most recent 12-month period for which data are available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(b) NOTIFICATION TO CERTIFIED REGIONS.—Not later than 15 days after the Director certifies a region under subsection (a), the Director shall notify the Governor of the State of such region and the officials of the region—

(1) of such certification;

(2) of the provisions of this Act;

(3) how to access the central information clearinghouse maintained under section 502(1) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3192(1)); and

(4) how to obtain the technical assistance described in section 4(d)(4).

SEC. 6. REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—A region may establish a committee in accordance with the provisions of this section to be known as a ''Regional Economic and Workforce Development Coordinating Committee'' (in this section referred to as a ''Committee'').

(b) COMPOSITION OF A COMMITTEE.—

(1) LOCAL PARTICIPATION.—A Committee established by a region under subsection (a) shall be composed of representatives of the groups signifi-

cantly affected by sudden and severe economic dislocation in such region, such as—

(A) State, tribal, municipal, county, and regional governments;

(B) planning boards;

(C) local businesses;

(D) labor and health organizations;

(E) 2-year institutions of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001));

(F) vocational institutions; and

(G) religious and other community-based groups that provide assistance to the workers of the region and the families of such workers.

(2) FEDERAL PARTICIPATION.—A Committee of a region shall have as ex officio members the following:

(A) A Federal economic recovery coordinator assigned by the Director under section 7(a) to such region.

(B) Such representatives of Federal agencies as the coordinator described in subparagraph (A) considers necessary.

(3) EXISTING ORGANIZATION.—A region may designate an existing organization in the region as

a Committee for purposes of this Act if the organization meets the requirements under paragraphs (1) and (2).

(c) DUTIES.—The duties of a Committee of a region are as follows:

(1) To ascertain the severity of the economic dislocation of the region, including consideration of measures of unemployment rates and employment opportunities.

(2) To assess the capacity of the region to respond to such economic dislocation and the needs of such region as such region undertakes economic adjustment, taking into consideration such factors as the following:

(A) The number of jobs lost as a result of the economic dislocation.

(B) The size of the region.

(C) The diversity of industries in the region.

(D) The skills of the labor force in the region.

(E) The condition of the labor market of the region.

(F) The availability of financial resources in the region.

(G) The quality and availability of educational facilities, including 2-year institutions of higher education and vocational institutions, that serve the region.

(3) To facilitate a dialogue between concerned interests in the region, represent the impacted region, and ensure all interests in the region work collaboratively toward collective goals without duplication of effort or resources.

(4) To create an executive council with an equitable representation of regional interests to ensure coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders of the region.

SEC. 7. FEDERAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY COORDINATORS.

(a) ASSIGNMENT.—Upon the request of an eligible region, the Director shall assign a Federal economic recovery coordinator to such region to carry out the duties described in subsection (b).

(b) DUTIES.—The duties of a Federal economic recovery coordinator assigned under subsection (a) to an eligible region are as follows:

(1) To provide technical assistance to the eligible region and assist in the development of a comprehensive economic development strategy (as used in sections 203 and 302 of the Public Works and

Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3143 and 3162)) for such region, including applying for applicable grants to develop or implement such plan.

(2) At the local or regional level, to coordinate the response of all Federal agencies offering economic adjustment assistance to the eligible region.

(3) Serve as an ex officio member of the Regional Economic and Workforce Development Coordinating Committee of such region established under section 6(a).

(4) To act as a liaison between the Regional Economic and Workforce Development Coordinating Committee established by the eligible region and all Federal agencies that offer economic adjustment assistance to eligible regions, including the following:

(A) The Department of Agriculture.

(B) The Department of Defense.

(C) The Department of Education.

(D) The Department of Labor.

(E) The Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(F) The Department of Health and Human Services.

(G) The Small Business Administration.

(H) The Department of the Treasury.

(I) The National Economic Council.

(J) The Department of Commerce.

(5) To report regularly to the Director regarding the progress of economic adjustment in the eligible region.

(6) To perform such other duties as the Secretary or the Director consider appropriate.

SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2011.

SEC. 9. NOTICE TO THE SECRETARY.

Section 3 of the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (29 U.S.C. 2102) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) NOTICE TO THE SECRETARY.—Not later than 60 days after a plant closing or mass layoff, the employer involved shall submit to the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Commerce separate notifications of the closing or layoff and the number of employees affected by such closing or layoff.''.

○