

Senate Bill 255

By: Senators Mullis of the 53rd, Gooch of the 51st, Miller of the 49th, Dugan of the 30th,
Ginn of the 47th and others

AS PASSED

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 34 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 "OneGeorgia Authority Act," so as to provide for a grant program to support border region
3 retail and tourism projects; to provide for criteria; to provide for a definition; to provide for
4 legislative findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
5 purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 The General Assembly finds that it is in the best interest of this state to:

- 9 (1) Increase tourism and competitiveness with bordering states by encouraging the
10 development of retail and tourism projects in border regions;
- 11 (2) Support the efforts of businesses attempting to expand in or relocate to Georgia by
12 dedicating resources to confront obstacles and barriers that impede economic growth in
13 border regions; and
- 14 (3) Promote the economic security of the citizens of this state through the retention or
15 development of employment opportunities.

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SECTION 2.

17 Chapter 34 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
18 "OneGeorgia Authority Act," is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:
19 "50-34-19.

20 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'border region' means any part of the state that
21 lies within 25 miles of a state border.

22 (b) Subject to appropriations, the authority shall establish and administer a grant program
23 to be called the Border Region Retail Tourism Development Program, which shall serve
24 the purpose of awarding grants to eligible applicants to induce businesses to, or assist
25 businesses that intend to, relocate, expand, or construct projects in Georgia rather than a
26 bordering state.

27 (c) The amount of any grant awarded pursuant to this Code section shall be determined by
28 the authority on a case-by-case review of applications consistent with criteria to be
29 prescribed by the authority which shall include, but shall not be limited to, the:

30 (1) Number and type of jobs retained or created;

31 (2) Total private capital investment;

32 (3) Impact on the state, regional, and community tax base;

33 (4) Degree of local commitment;

34 (5) Consistency with local and regional development goals and objectives;

35 (6) Project readiness and feasibility;

36 (7) Geographic distribution of existing retail and tourism facilities; and

37 (8) Reasonableness of cost estimates.

38 (d) All applications for grants under this Code section shall include a recommendation
39 from a state agency whose statutory powers and duties include community and economic
40 development that the proposed project will significantly develop, promote, and retain trade,
41 commerce, industry, and employment opportunities within the border region and promote
42 the general welfare of the state.

43 (e) After reviewing an application, the authority shall submit any pending grant award to
44 the Governor and the commissioner of economic development for approval before such
45 grant shall be awarded.

46 (f) The authority shall adopt such rules and regulations as are reasonable and necessary to
47 implement and administer the grant program established under this Code section."

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SECTION 3.

49 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.