SB 180-FN - AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

03/06/2025 0507s

2025 SESSION

25-0990
02/05

SENATE BILL ***180-FN***

AN ACT designating Coos county as a distressed place-based economy.

SPONSORS: Sen. Rochefort, Dist 1; Rep. Durkin, Coos 1; Rep. S. King, Coos 4; Rep. A. Davis, Coos 2; Rep. Ouellet, Coos 3; Rep. Tierney, Coos 1

COMMITTEE: Executive Departments and Administration

ANALYSIS

This bill designates Coos County as a distressed place-based economy and requires commissioners of state agencies to consult with county commissioners before making regulatory decisions that would affect Coos County.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT designating Coos county as a distressed place-based economy.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 Legislative Intent. Traditional one-size-fits-all government services systemically disadvantage various sections of the population or economically distressed rural regions. Coos County has repeatedly endured significant economic losses and has faced comparatively greater financial impacts and higher unemployment than other counties in the state. Therefore, in an attempt to foster greater economic sustainability for its interdependent industries and to stimulate economic growth in Coos County, the general court recognizes Coos County is a place-based economy that requires collaborative and tailored regulatory decision-making. Local governments and businesses will see greater success when departments use public-private partnerships to utilize shared knowledge, strengths, and resources to drive solutions. Greater effort is needed to view local governmental jurisdictions as partners to allow for more efficient use of resources and enforcement and avoid inconsistent directives with regional economic conditions.

2 New Chapter; Coos County Established as Distressed Place-Based Economy. Amend RSA by inserting after chapter 162-T the following new chapter:

CHAPTER 162-U

COOS COUNTY ESTABLISHED AS DISTRESSED PLACE-BASED ECONOMY

162-U:1 Definitions. In this chapter:

I. "Place-based economy" means a tailored economic development response that uses a region's unique characteristics to create and sustain growth. The goal is to improve the quality of life and economic vitality by building on its limited strengths and assets.

II. "Distressed" means an area that has a high rate of poverty, unemployment, or outmigration and is the most severely and persistently economically distressed and underdeveloped.

162-U:2 Regulatory Principle for Department Commissioners. Commissioners of state departments shall include county government input for any Coos County decisions impacting its place-based economy. Collaborative regulatory approaches with existing regional economic objectives shall minimize unintended economic impacts. To protect the health, safety, and economic welfare of Coos' interdependent place-based economy, agencies shall seek to achieve statutory goals as effectively and efficiently as possible without imposing unnecessary burdens on local governments. Failure to recognize differences in the scale and resources of these entities adversely affects competition in the marketplace, discourages innovation, and restricts productivity improvements to the economic landscape.

162-U:3 Application. To uphold the principles outlined in this chapter, the following actions apply solely to agency decisions that would result in an economic downturn and impact private sector entities desiring to engage in job creation and economic development activities as well as a decrease in local and state revenues. These actions do not apply to residential or unrelated regulatory permitting matters. Agency commissioners shall ensure that any management plans or decisions in Coos County promptly and thoroughly consider and avoid potential impacts on the regional economy and related local and state economic development plans. If a decision is found to negatively affect the region and is deemed unavoidable, commissioners must provide Coos County with a clear justification for the decision and develop mitigation measures for undermining revitalization investments to improve the economic performance.

3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

LBA
25-0990
Revised 2/4/25

SB 180-FN FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED

AN ACT designating Coos county as a distressed place-based economy.

FISCAL IMPACT: This bill does not provide funding, nor does it authorize new positions.

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2025	**FY 2026**	**FY 2027**	**FY 2028**
Revenue	$0	$0	$0	$0
Revenue Fund(s)	None			
Expenditures*	$0	Indeterminable Increase		
Funding Source(s)	General Fund, Highway Fund, and Various Agency Funds			
Appropriations*	$0	$0	$0	$0
Funding Source(s)	None			

***Expenditure = Cost of bill** ***Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill**

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2025	**FY 2026**	**FY 2027**	**FY 2028**
County Revenue	$0	Indeterminable		
County Expenditures	$0	Indeterminable Increase		
Local Revenue	$0	Indeterminable		
Local Expenditures	$0	Indeterminable Increase		

METHODOLOGY:

This bill designates Coos County as a distressed place-based economy and requires commissioners of state agencies to consult with county commissioners before making regulatory decisions that would affect Coos County.

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) asserts that the bill will lead to indeterminable expenditures due to the variable number of rules that may be modified. Furthermore, DAS anticipates that staff time required for the adoption of administrative rules will likely double, given that all DAS rules are applicable statewide. Additional staff time will be necessary for researching suitable partners in Coos County and gathering their feedback. DAS rules are primarily crafted to ensure state compliance with federal laws and regulations. To adhere to the bill's requirements, DAS would need to engage with county governments before implementing any changes.

The Department of Environmental Services (DES) has indicated that this bill would require the Department to seek input from the Coos County government for regulatory decisions. Furthermore, the bill would require DES to assess interdependent economies and economic development plans in Coos County prior to making any regulatory decisions. This necessitates additional staffing, as the current staffing lacks the expertise to interpret these economic development plans in their regulatory decision-making process. The impact depends on how "regulatory action" is defined. DES estimates an increase in expenditures ranging from more than $500,000 to $1,000,000 if the bill applies solely to permit applications. If the definition of regulatory actions is broader, the fiscal impact may exceed $1,000,000.

The Department of Transportation states that this bill would increase Highway Fund costs associated with the possible need to hire a consultant for analysis, as well as delays in the approval or denial process for permit applications due to the following increased efforts. The permits with an economic impact include driveways, utility trenches and utility poles, snowmobiles, and OHRVs. The DOT would have to coordinate with Coos County for meetings, site visits, administrative work, as well as analysis of interdependent and/or economic development plans, and lastly to ensure decisions are compatible between agencies. The increase in expenditures is indeterminable.

The Fish and Game Department states that the fiscal impact of this bill is indeterminable as it lacks sufficient language, guidance, and definitions to determine how this would change Department operations. With the broad language, the Department assumes the tasks required would necessitate additional staff time. Therefore anticipating that the fiscal impact could amount to anywhere between $10,000 and $100,000 per year. Nonetheless, this projection is highly contingent on the extent of regulations and decisions made, as well as how mitigation is defined.

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources cannot predict how much the bill will cost because they don't know if or what regulatory changes might need to be made in Coos County, and thus can't calculate those potential expenses.

It is assumed that any fiscal impact would occur after FY 2025.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of Administrative Services, Department of Environmental Services, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, and Fish and Game Department