

The House Committee on Rural Development offers the following substitute to HB 262:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 Department of Community Health, so as to provide for a grant program for the purpose of
3 providing funding to certain rural hospitals for acquiring or installing backup generators to
4 ensure continuity of operation during a state of emergency; to provide that the department
5 shall consult with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency in
6 establishing grant criteria; to provide for the department to establish grant amounts; to
7 provide for definitions; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to
8 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 Chapter 2 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department
12 of Community Health, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

13 "31-2-20.

14 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) 'Affected rural hospital' means an acute care hospital located in a rural county that contains fewer than 100 beds and is located in any region of the state in which the Governor declared a state of emergency after July 1, 2024.

(2) 'Rural county' means a county in this state that has a population of less than 50,000 according to the United States decennial census of 2020 or any future such census; provided, however, that for counties which contain a military base or installation, the military personnel and their dependents living in such county shall be excluded from the total population of such county for purposes of this definition.

(b) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly or other available funding, the department shall establish a grant program to provide funding to affected rural hospitals for the purpose of acquiring, installing, or both acquiring and installing backup generators to ensure continuity of operation during a state of emergency. The department, in consultation with the director of emergency management and homeland security shall establish grant criteria and make award decisions; provided, however, that the department and the director of emergency management and homeland security shall, to the greatest extent possible, prioritize the approval of applications of those affected rural hospitals lacking backup generators and the means by which to install them. The department shall be authorized to establish the grant amount awarded to each recipient on a case-by-case basis."

SECTION 2.

This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SECTION 3.

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