

## SJR92 INTRODUCED



1 SJR92

2 V7B9HPV-1

3 By Senators Gudger, Albritton, Allen, Barfoot, Beasley, Bell,

4 Butler, Carnley, Chambliss, Chesteen, Coleman,

5 Coleman-Madison, Elliott, Figures, Givhan, Hatcher, Hovey,

6 Jones, Kelley, Kitchens, Livingston, Melson, Orr, Price,

7 Roberts, Sessions, Shelnutt, Singleton, Smitherman, Stewart,

8 Stutts, Waggoner, Weaver, Williams

9 RFD:

10 First Read: 06-May-25



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4 SJR\_\_\_ ENCOURAGING THE ALABAMA GROWTH ALLIANCE TO DEVELOP  
5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF RURAL ALABAMA THROUGH  
6 THE ALABAMA RURAL ROADMAP.

7  
8 WHEREAS, the prosperity and well-being of the State  
9 of Alabama are fundamentally dependent upon the economic  
10 health and vitality of its communities, particularly those  
11 in diverse and strategically important rural regions; and

12 WHEREAS, many rural counties in Alabama face critical  
13 challenges, including aging infrastructure, limited access  
14 to capital for small businesses, a shortage of skilled  
15 workers, declining populations, and inadequate access to  
16 quality health care, all of which threaten economic  
17 viability and the overall progress of the state; and

18 WHEREAS, a comprehensive, coordinated, and strategic  
19 approach is urgently needed to address these multifaceted  
20 challenges, to leverage the unique strengths of rural  
21 communities, and to foster sustainable growth and  
22 opportunity across the diverse landscape of Alabama; and

23 WHEREAS, the Alabama Growth Alliance, with its  
24 expertise in fostering economic development and strategic  
25 planning, is uniquely positioned to spearhead the  
26 development of a statewide rural development program; and

27 WHEREAS, a focused and sustained commitment to  
28 enhancing infrastructure, fostering business development and



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entrepreneurship, strengthening workforce development and training, improving quality of life and placemaking, and ensuring access to quality rural health care is essential for the long-term prosperity and resilience of Alabama's rural communities; and

WHEREAS, this body recognizes the urgent need to prioritize the development and implementation of a robust statewide rural development program to secure a brighter and more prosperous future for all Alabamians, regardless of geographic location; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the Alabama Growth Alliance is strongly encouraged to develop an Alabama Rural Roadmap initiative, to serve as the cornerstone of a comprehensive statewide rural development program designed to provide recommendations to revitalize and empower Alabama's rural communities under the direction of a strong leadership team.

(a)(1) The leadership team of the initiative shall consist of the Senate President Pro Tempore, or his or her designee, as chair of the initiative, who shall appoint and convene a group of legislators, business leaders, economic developers, and other relevant individuals to provide oversight of the program and ensure that the Alabama Growth Alliance is compiling all relevant data and providing for the successful completion and transmission of the Alabama Rural Roadmap to the Legislature.

(2) The Senate President Pro Tempore, or his or her designee, shall coordinate appointments to the leadership



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57 team to assure the membership of the team is inclusive and  
58 reflects the racial, gender, geographic, urban, rural, and  
59 economic diversity of the state.

60 (b) The Alabama Growth Alliance shall do all of the  
61 following:

62 (1) Actively engage all relevant stakeholders,  
63 including local government officials, community leaders,  
64 business owners, and residents in support of this  
65 initiative.

66 (2) Collaborate with and leverage the expertise of  
67 Alabama's universities, research institutions, relevant  
68 state agencies, and private sector industries to solicit  
69 recommendations, conduct rigorous studies, and identify  
70 innovative and sustainable opportunities for rural economic  
71 development across the state.

72 (3) Accurately identify distressed rural areas based  
73 on clearly defined and measurable criteria, conduct in-depth  
74 analyses to determine the underlying causes contributing to  
75 the economic vulnerabilities and challenges faced by these  
76 communities, and include within the Alabama Rural Roadmap  
77 specific, actionable, and measurable policy recommendations  
78 and strategies focused on, but not limited to, the following  
79 key areas:

80 a. Infrastructure Development: Investing in and  
81 modernizing critical infrastructure, including enhancing  
82 industrial sites, strengthening and expanding electric, gas,  
83 and water infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of  
84 businesses and residents, expanding broadband access to



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85 bridge the digital divide, and developing and improving  
86 essential community buildings and downtown districts.

87           b. Business Development and Entrepreneurship:  
88 Leveraging the resources and expertise of Innovate Alabama  
89 to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship,  
90 bolstering and expanding small business support programs and  
91 networks to provide technical assistance, increasing access  
92 to capital and mentorship opportunities, facilitating access  
93 to diverse banking programs and financial resources, and  
94 creating more business incubators and accelerators in rural  
95 areas to nurture startups and support the growth of existing  
96 businesses.

97           c. Workforce Development and Training: Implementing  
98 and expanding regional training initiatives to equip rural  
99 residents with the skills needed to succeed in high-demand  
100 industries, expanding access to online Career and Technical  
101 Education programs and facilities to provide flexible and  
102 accessible training opportunities, and developing  
103 comprehensive strategies to address workforce shortages and  
104 meet the evolving workforce needs of rural employers.

105           d. Quality of Life and Placemaking: Developing a  
106 holistic and sustainable strategy for the creation of  
107 placemaking grants that are designed to support  
108 community-driven initiatives that enhance the  
109 attractiveness, livability, and cultural vibrancy of rural  
110 communities, foster a sense of place and community pride,  
111 through funding by the Alabama Development Fund.



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112           e. Improving Rural Health care: Identifying and  
113   proposing long-term, sustainable, and innovative solutions  
114   to improve access to quality and affordable health care  
115   services in rural Alabama, address health care disparities,  
116   and enhance the overall health and well-being of rural  
117   residents.

118           (c) The Alabama Rural Roadmap shall be completed and  
119   submitted to the Governor, the Chair of the Senate Fiscal  
120   Responsibility and Economic Development Committee, the Chair  
121   of the House of Representatives Fiscal Responsibility  
122   Committee, and the Secretary of the Alabama Department of  
123   Commerce no later than the fifth legislative day of the 2026  
124   Regular Session, at which point the initiative shall stand  
125   dissolved of any future duties.

126           (d) It is the intent of this body to give full and  
127   careful consideration to the recommendations contained  
128   within the Alabama Rural Roadmap and to consider any  
129   suggested legislation to effectively implement strategies  
130   and achieve the goals prescribed by this resolution.