Summary of the "Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024."

Sec. 2211: Definitions
Revises and introduces key definitions, including "blue economy," "capacity building," and "travel and tourism," to reflect updated priorities in economic development. It also aligns terminology with modern economic and environmental contexts to enhance program clarity and applicability.

Sec. 2212: Increased Coordination
Enhances coordination among federal, state, and regional economic development entities through regular meetings to reduce duplication of efforts and improve strategic alignment, especially with Regional Commissions.

This section emphasizes enhanced coordination between various entities involved in economic development. It grants the Secretary of Commerce the authority to convene meetings with federal agencies, state and local governments, economic development districts, Indian tribes, and other relevant organizations to improve economic development efforts. Additionally, the section mandates that the Secretary hold biennial meetings with Regional Commissions to foster collaboration, reduce duplication of efforts, and develop best practices for regional economic development. These meetings will include representatives such as the Federal and State Co-chairpersons of the Regional Commissions. The Secretary is required to prepare and publish a report within one year of each meeting, detailing planned actions to improve coordination, strategies for reducing effort duplication, and any best practices developed during these discussions.

Sec. 2213: Grants for Public Works and Economic Development
Expands the scope of public works grants to include projects addressing climate resilience, economic diversification, and broadband access. Additional criteria prioritize rural and underserved communities while supporting outdoor recreation and economic recovery.

Grants provided under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 may now be awarded for projects focused on improving waste management and recycling systems, increasing infrastructure resilience, and addressing economic diversification in the affected regions. Additional considerations for grant eligibility include projects that mitigate the economic impacts of extreme weather, support broadband expansion, promote outdoor recreation and travel, and contribute to the blue economy. The Secretary may prioritize projects benefiting rural communities with limited resources, fostering job creation and retention relative to regional needs, and supporting activities that enhance economic resilience and diversification.

Sec. 2214: Grants for Planning and Administrative Expenses
Enables grants to cover expenses related to economic planning, project predevelopment, and professional staffing. It aligns development plans with regional strategies and supports recovery efforts in response to disasters.

Grants under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 may now cover a range of administrative expenses associated with economic planning and project development. Eligible expenses include those related to predevelopment activities, updating economic development plans to align with regional strategies, and hiring professional staff to assist communities in implementing comprehensive economic development strategies. Additional support includes leveraging other federal, state, and tribal programs, attracting private and philanthropic investment, preparing economic recovery plans in response to disasters, and conducting activities in accordance with professional economic development practices. This provision aims to enhance the capacity of communities to effectively plan and execute economic development initiatives.

Sec. 2215: Cost Sharing
Increases the federal share of project costs from 50% to 60%, with provisions for additional flexibility in small or under-resourced communities, allowing full federal funding in certain cases.

This section provides greater federal financial support for economic development initiatives. It also allows funds contributed by Regional Commissions to count toward the non-federal share of project costs. The section includes provisions for communities facing financial challenges, such as permitting the Secretary to waive local matching fund requirements when such funds are not reasonably obtainable. Furthermore, small communities with fewer than 10,000 residents that meet specific eligibility criteria may receive up to 100% federal funding for their projects, ensuring more equitable access to resources for underserved areas.

Sec. 2216: Regulations on Relative Needs and Allocations
Updates evaluation criteria for grant allocation, incorporating labor force participation and underemployment data to better address regional economic disparities.

This section updates the criteria for assessing the needs and priorities of eligible areas under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965. It emphasizes evaluating factors such as per capita income levels, labor force participation rates, and the extent of underemployment when determining allocations. Additionally, it highlights the importance of both job creation and job retention in addressing economic disparities. These changes aim to ensure that resources are directed to communities with the greatest need for economic development support.

Sec. 2217: Research and Technical Assistance; University Centers
Establishes university centers to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and workforce development. These centers will collaborate with local entities and provide technical assistance to drive economic growth and capacity building.

This section authorizes the establishment of university centers to enhance economic development through research, technical assistance, and capacity-building initiatives. These centers will collaborate with local economic development districts and other service providers to support comprehensive economic strategies, innovation, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and regional growth. They will also provide technical assistance and technology transfer services to local businesses, establish partnerships with technology commercialization intermediaries, and assist communities with data analysis and research to inform economic development and adjustment strategies. The Secretary will prioritize grants to regional public universities located in or near distressed communities, recognizing their critical role in supporting local economic recovery and growth.

Sec. 2218: Investment Priorities
Defines investment priorities such as critical infrastructure, workforce training, innovation, and

economic resilience. Projects must align with these priorities to qualify for assistance, ensuring relevance to local economic needs.

Congress establishes that eligible projects must align with one or more key investment priorities, including the development of critical infrastructure such as transportation and telecommunications, workforce development initiatives that support job training and labor force participation, and efforts to foster innovation and entrepreneurship. Additional priorities include enhancing economic resilience to recover from adverse conditions, supporting manufacturing expansion, and encouraging technology-driven business growth. The Secretary retains the flexibility to adopt additional investment priorities with prior notification to relevant congressional committees, ensuring projects address evolving economic needs while adhering to established objectives.

Sec. 2219: Grants for Economic Adjustment
Provides grants to communities affected by economic disruptions in industries like coal, steel, and agriculture. New provisions include support for areas impacted by natural disasters and economic transitions in energy sectors.

This section authorizes grants to support communities facing economic dislocation, such as industry contractions, natural disasters, and other significant disruptions. It expands eligibility to include projects in sectors such as travel and tourism, the blue economy, and agriculture. Special provisions address economic challenges related to the closure of steel plants, coal industry transitions, and water shortages due to drought or extreme heat. The section also provides specific assistance to communities affected by changes in the coal and nuclear energy industries, enabling economic recovery through projects that create jobs, enhance infrastructure, and foster long-term economic sustainability. These measures aim to support economic restructuring and resilience in distressed areas.

Sec. 2220: Renewable Energy Program
Refocuses the program to promote the redevelopment of brownfield sites using renewable energy technologies, including solar, wind, and geothermal, to encourage sustainable development.

This section redefines and expands the renewable energy program to focus on redeveloping brownfield sites into renewable energy sites using technologies such as solar, wind, geothermal, ocean energy, and other proven renewable solutions. The program aims to encourage sustainable economic development by supporting projects that integrate renewable energy technologies into site redevelopment, fostering environmental innovation and resilience in economically distressed areas. This shift broadens the scope of renewable energy applications, promoting cleaner and more sustainable energy infrastructure.

Sec. 2221: Workforce Training Grants
Introduces grants to fund workforce training programs, including equipment acquisition, facility development, and state-level initiatives for addressing critical industry staffing shortages.

This section authorizes grants to support the development and expansion of workforce training programs designed to meet the needs of critical industries. Eligible uses of grant funds include acquiring land, constructing or improving training facilities, purchasing equipment, and implementing innovative training programs. The grants also support sector partnerships, program design, and technical assistance to address skills gaps in high-demand industries. A pilot program is included for states to fund individual training initiatives for occupations requiring significant post-secondary training but not a degree. These efforts aim to create pathways to quality jobs, enhance workforce readiness, and drive economic growth in key sectors.

Sec. 2222: Congressional Notification Requirements
Mandates advance notification to Congress for grants exceeding $100,000, ensuring transparency and accountability in economic development funding decisions.

This section establishes transparency requirements for larger grant awards. The Secretary must notify the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure at least three business days before informing grant recipients of awards exceeding $100,000. The notification must include details such as the project name, applicant, location, grant amount, expected job impacts, and completion timeline. Additionally, this information must be made publicly available within 60 days, ensuring accountability for and oversight of substantial economic development investments.

Sec. 2223: High-Speed Broadband Deployment Initiative
Establishes grants for broadband infrastructure projects, with a focus on underserved and rural areas, aiming to improve connectivity and foster economic growth.

This section establishes an on-going grant initiative to support the development, extension, and improvement of high-speed broadband infrastructure. Eligible activities include planning, technical assistance, land acquisition, and construction or improvement of broadband facilities. The initiative emphasizes geographic diversity and prioritizes underserved and rural markets. The Secretary will collaborate with agencies like the Federal Communications Commission to assess existing and planned broadband services in the target areas. For projects involving public-private partnerships, the ownership of broadband infrastructure must initially reside with a public or nonprofit partner. The initiative aims to enhance connectivity and economic participation in underserved regions, driving economic growth and reducing digital divides.

Sec. 2224: Critical Supply Chain Site Development Grant Program
Creates grants to develop manufacturing-ready sites, prioritizing projects that benefit rural and disadvantaged areas while supporting strategic industries critical to national security.

This section creates the Critical Supply Chain Site Development Grant Program to support the development or expansion of sites to prepare them for manufacturing projects critical to the national and economic security of the United States. Eligible activities include investments in utilities, last-mile infrastructure, site readiness such as zoning and permitting, and workforce development initiatives. Priority is given to projects that improve economic conditions in rural and disadvantaged communities, align with regional economic strategies, and demonstrate public and private funding commitments. The program ensures sites are ready for industrial use without requiring prior private sector selection, focusing on long-term development and strategic economic growth.

Sec. 2225: Updated Distress Criteria and Grant Rates
Refines eligibility criteria for distressed communities, incorporating factors such as labor force participation and income levels. Includes a requirement for transparency when expanding development districts.

This section updates the criteria for defining economically distressed areas eligible for grants to include low median household income, high unemployment or underemployment, low labor force participation, and economic dislocation caused by energy industry transitions. Additionally, the section mandates transparency in the inclusion of neighboring counties and communities in economic development districts, requiring detailed justifications and economic indicators for such decisions. These updates aim to ensure that resources are directed to areas most in need while maintaining accountability in funding allocations.

Sec. 2226: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS)
Enhances flexibility in economic planning to address the impacts of extreme weather and adapts development strategies to evolving regional needs.

This section updates the requirements CEDS to emphasize the importance of incorporating measures to mitigate and adapt to the economic impacts of extreme weather in development planning. Additionally, it provides an exception for certain grants, such as those related to university centers or areas with overlapping CEDS coverage, allowing for more flexibility in project eligibility. These updates aim to enhance the relevance and adaptability of economic strategies to address modern challenges and regional needs effectively.

Sec. 2227: Office of Tribal Economic Development
Establishes a dedicated office to coordinate tribal economic development efforts, streamline access to federal programs, and develop strategic plans tailored to tribal communities.

This section establishes an EDA Office of Tribal Economic Development to support tribal communities in accessing and implementing economic development programs. The office will coordinate tribal strategies, assist with navigating federal assistance programs, and collaborate with other federal agencies to align economic development efforts. Additionally, it will develop a strategic plan for tribal economic development through consultation and update it every three years. A public-facing website will provide centralized information on available programs, and dedicated staff will ensure the office has sufficient resources to effectively serve tribal communities and advance their economic goals.

Sec. 2228: Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience
Creates an office to manage economic recovery and resilience efforts post-disaster, providing technical assistance and long-term support for affected communities.

This section establishes an EDA Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience to lead post-disaster economic recovery efforts. The office will support long-term recovery in communities affected by major disasters or significant national events by deploying assessment teams, coordinating additional resources, providing technical assistance, and offering flexibility in existing awards. It authorizes temporary personnel appointments to address recovery needs efficiently and allows for the formation of a disaster team comprising trained members from EDA, US DOC, and other federal agencies. The office will also submit annual reports to Congress detailing its activities, deployments, and expenditures to ensure transparency and accountability in disaster recovery efforts.

Sec. 2229: Establishment of Technical Assistance Liaisons
Designates staff to assist under-resourced communities with grant applications and feedback on unsuccessful submissions, improving access to federal funding.

This section authorizes the designation of Technical Assistance Liaisons in EDA regional offices to support under-resourced communities in applying for economic development grants. These liaisons will work alongside Economic Development Representatives to provide technical guidance, improve grant application processes, and offer feedback on unsuccessful submissions upon request. Additionally, the Secretary may enter into contracts or cooperative agreements to provide further technical assistance to communities seeking to navigate and access federal economic development programs. This initiative aims to enhance accessibility and equity in grant distribution for underserved regions.

Sec. 2230: Annual Report to Congress
Requires detailed annual reports on the impact of grants, including job creation, rural benefits, and project timelines, ensuring transparency and accountability.

This section requires the EDA to submit an annual report to Congress providing detailed information on its activities and grant impacts. The report must include a list of grants benefiting rural areas, the process used to determine these benefits, and certifications that projects meet rural criteria. It also mandates reporting on completed and closed construction projects, including details such as project timelines, funding sources, and job creation outcomes. Additionally, the EDA must analyze and report on delays in project timelines, identifying causes and potential improvements. All reports must be made publicly available to ensure transparency and accountability in the administration's operations.

Sec. 2231: Economic Development Representatives
Encourages the use of Economic Development Representatives to support under-resourced communities, with a focus on coal-impacted regions.

This section emphasizes the importance of Economic Development Representatives (EDRs) in supporting under-resourced communities, particularly those impacted by economic challenges such as coal industry transitions. It encourages EDA to continue deploying EDRs to facilitate access to federal economic development assistance programs. The Secretary of Commerce may consider the unique needs of coal communities when assigning EDRs, ensuring tailored support to foster economic recovery and growth in these areas.

Sec. 2232: Modernization of Environmental Reviews
Directs the Department of Commerce to streamline environmental reviews for economic development projects, leveraging existing exclusions and programmatic agreements.

This section requires the Secretary of Commerce to submit a report within 180 days detailing efforts to streamline environmental reviews for EDA funded projects. The report must address the use of categorical exclusions and programmatic environmental documents, as well as describe plans for implementing amendments to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Secretary will evaluate opportunities to adopt additional exclusions, develop programmatic environmental documents, and collaborate with other federal agencies to improve efficiency. A final rule to implement these measures must be issued within two years, ensuring predictable and timely environmental reviews for economic development projects.

Sec. 2233: GAO Report on Economic Development Programs
Tasks the Government Accountability Office (GAO) with evaluating the effectiveness and coordination of federal and regional economic development programs.

This section directs the GAO to evaluate the impact of EDA and Regional Commission-administered economic development programs. The report, due on September 30, 2026, must assess program outcomes, including job creation, unemployment reduction, and private investment leveraged. It will also examine the coordination of activities between the EDA and Regional Commissions, their efforts to document program impacts, and any additional factors relevant to program effectiveness. The GAO will provide recommendations for legislative improvements to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of these economic development programs.

Sec. 2234: GAO Report on EDA Regulations and Policies
Instructs the GAO to review regulations and identify barriers to applying for grants, particularly for small communities, while recommending improvements.

This section requires the GAO to evaluate how EDA regulations and policies impact the ability of communities, particularly small ones, to apply for and administer grants. The report, due within two years, will review the technical capacity of eligible recipients, barriers faced by small communities, and the efficiency of the grant application and disbursement processes. It will also provide recommendations for simplifying the application process, improving communication with grantees, and addressing regulatory hurdles, including those related to environmental requirements. The goal is to make EDA programs more accessible and effective for under-resourced communities.

Sec. 2235: GAO Study on Rural Communities
Mandates a study of the Economic Development Administration's funding impacts on rural communities, focusing on employment and housing availability.

This section directs GAO to conduct a study evaluating the impact of EDA funding on rural distressed communities. The study will focus on at least five geographically diverse rural areas and examine how EDA funding has influenced local job creation, unemployment rates, and affordable housing availability. Upon completion, the GAO will submit a report to Congress with its findings and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of EDA funding in improving economic conditions in rural communities.

Sec. 2236: General Authorization of Appropriations
Outlines appropriations for economic development initiatives, gradually increasing funding levels for targeted grant programs from 2025 to 2029.

This section authorizes funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs for fiscal years 2025 through 2029, with specified amounts allocated to various initiatives. The authorized funding levels are as follows:

Program Name	FY 2025 ($M)	FY 2026 ($M)	FY 2027 ($M)	FY 2028 ($M)	FY 2029 ($M)	Five-Year Total ($M)
Public Works	170	195	220	245	270	1100
Planning	90	100	110	120	130	550
Training, Research, and Technical Assistance	25	30	35	40	45	175
Economic Adjustment Assistance	65	75	85	95	105	425
Assistance to Coal Communities	50	50	50	50	50	250
Assistance to Nuclear Closure Communities	50	50	50	50	50	250
Assistance to Energy Transition Communities	50	50	50	50	50	250
Assistance to Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Communities	50	50	50	50	50	250
Assistance to Blue Economy Communities	50	50	50	50	50	250
Assistance to Agriculture Communities	50	50	50	50	50	250
Disaster Economic Recovery	100	100	100	100	100	500
Workforce Training	50	50	50	50	50	250
Critical Supply Chain Site Development	50	50	50	50	50	250
Total Authorization	850	900	950	1,000	1,050	4,750

These appropriations aim to support a wide range of economic development activities, including infrastructure projects, planning, research, technical assistance, workforce training, disaster recovery, and targeted assistance to specific communities and industries.

Sec. 2237: Technical Correction
Provides technical updates to the Act's structure, ensuring clarity and consistency in its implementation and reference materials.

Summary of Important Features of Regional Commission Authorizations

Section 2241: Regional Commission Authorizations
This section increases the annual funding authorization for each Regional Commission to $40 million for fiscal years 2025 through 2029. This substantial funding ensures that the Commissions have the resources necessary to execute their economic development and infrastructure improvement mandates effectively.

Section 2242: Regional Commission Modifications
This section updates operational and administrative provisions for Regional Commissions to enhance their functionality. Key changes include allowing alternate State members to delegate

voting authority to designees, establishing clearer quorum requirements for decision-making, and permitting the collection and retention of fees for services provided. Additionally, State members can now participate in meetings virtually, and the deadline for submitting annual reports is extended to 180 days, offering greater flexibility in governance and reporting.

Section 2243: Transfer of Funds Among Federal Agencies
Regional Commissions are authorized to transfer funds to and accept funds from other federal agencies, provided the transfers align with the original purposes of the appropriations. This measure facilitates interagency collaboration and resource sharing, ensuring efficient use of federal funds for economic development.

Section 2244: Financial Assistance
Funds allocated to Regional Commissions can now be used to cover the non-federal cost share of projects funded under other federal grant programs. This provision addresses a common barrier faced by under-resourced communities, making it easier for them to leverage federal grant opportunities and undertake critical economic development projects.

Significance Across Sections
Collectively, these provisions modernize the governance, funding, and operational mechanisms of Regional Commissions. They address barriers to funding access, streamline decision-making, and foster collaboration among federal agencies. These changes aim to enhance the impact and reach of Regional Commissions in supporting economic development and infrastructure improvements across their respective regions.

Sections 2245, 2246, and 2247: Northern Border, Southwest Border, and Great Lakes Authority

These sections reauthorize and expand the service areas of the respective regional commissions and clarifies the Great Lakes Authority's area to include all counties that contain the Great Lakes. These updates aim to address the evolving economic and infrastructure needs of these regions, allowing more communities to benefit from development programs and federal support.

Section 2248: Additional Regional Commission Programs

This section establishes two key initiatives to enhance the capabilities of Regional Commissions: the **State Capacity Building Grant Program** and the **Demonstration Health Projects** program. The State Capacity Building Grant Program supports business retention, job creation, workforce development, infrastructure planning, and innovation in distressed counties, requiring annual state work plans and proportional grant allocation. It authorizes University Partnerships to build capacity in distressed counties where project management, financial management, and professional training may be needed due to worker shortages. The Demonstration Health Projects program focuses on improving healthcare facilities and services, offering grants for planning, construction, and operations, with priority given to addressing addiction, healthcare workforce shortages, and chronic health issues. Together, these programs strengthen local capacity, promote innovative economic practices, and link improved healthcare access to regional economic growth.

Sections 2249 and 2250 Establish the Mid-Atlantic and Southern New England Regional Commissions

These sections establish two new Regional Commissions to support economic development and infrastructure improvement. Section 2249 creates the Mid-Atlantic Regional Commission, covering all counties in Delaware, Maryland (excluding those served by the Appalachian Regional Commission), and Pennsylvania (excluding those served by the Appalachian Regional Commission). Section 2250 establishes the Southern New England Regional Commission, including all counties in Rhode Island, six counties in Connecticut (Hartford, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, and Windham), and all counties in Massachusetts. These new commissions aim to address regional economic disparities, enhance infrastructure, and foster collaboration across states to promote sustainable development.

Sections 2251 and 2252: Denali commission and Denali Housing Fund

These sections focus on reauthorizing and enhancing the Denali Commission's ability to support economic development and housing initiatives in Alaska. Section 2251 increases the Denali Commission's funding from $15 million to $35 million annually for fiscal years 2025 through 2029, expanding its powers to enter into leases, use funds for non-federal shares of projects, and facilitate interagency transfers. Section 2252 establishes the Denali Housing Fund, with $5 million annually for fiscal years 2025 through 2029, to provide grants and loans for housing construction and rehabilitation in rural Alaska. This Fund targets low- and moderate-income households and public employees, aiming to address housing shortages and improve living conditions in underserved areas. Together, these provisions strengthen the Denali Commission's role in fostering infrastructure, economic growth, and better housing in rural Alaska.

Sections 2253 and 2254: Delta Regional Authority and Northern Great Plains Regional Authority

These sections focus on the reauthorization of two regional authorities to support economic development in underserved areas. Section 2253 reauthorizes the Delta Regional Authority, increasing its funding from $30 million to $40 million annually for fiscal years 2025 through 2029. The section also repeals the authority's termination provision, expands its ability to collect fees for programs, and ensures the continuity of leadership during vacancies in key positions. Section 2254 reauthorizes the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority, increasing its funding from $30 million to $40 million annually for fiscal years 2025 through 2029. It also repeals the authority's termination provision, ensuring sustained support for infrastructure and economic development in the Northern Great Plains region. Both sections aim to provide consistent federal support to these regional authorities, addressing economic disparities and promoting growth in their respective areas.