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Governor DeSantis Signs Legislation to Streamline Economic Development in Florida

Governor DeSantis also announced his intent to appoint J. Alex Kelly to lead the newly created Florida Department of Commerce

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed House Bill 5, creating a singular Department of Commerce in Florida to streamline and modernize Florida's economic development agencies to meet the needs of today's businesses. The bill:

- Consolidates the responsibilities and resources of Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) into the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), which the bill also renames as the Department of Commerce;
- Creates a new direct-support organization (DSO) responsible for international economic development within the Department of Commerce;
- Reconstitutes VISIT FLORIDA and the Florida Sports Foundation also as DSOs of the Department of Commerce; and
- Repeals several underutilized and duplicative economic incentive programs that often create more confusion than answers for business and industry.

To lead the newly created Department of Commerce, Governor DeSantis has announced his intent to appoint J. Alex Kelly, who currently serves as Deputy Chief of Staff for the Governor.

"Florida continues to be the nation's top destination for new businesses, workforce development, and tourism, and streamlining our economic development programs in the Florida Department of Commerce will further support Florida's thriving economy," said **Governor Ron DeSantis**.

"Floridians deserve a level playing field that empowers local entrepreneurs to thrive," said **House Speaker Paul Renner**. "Governor DeSantis is championing good stewardship of taxpayer's hard-earned money by eliminating wasteful entities like Enterprise Florida. By establishing the new Department of Commerce, we will embark on a revitalized mission to strategically pave the way towards an even brighter future."

Florida's economy continues to thrive under the leadership of Governor DeSantis. Earlier this month, Governor DeSantis announced that Florida has the lowest unemployment rate of the nation's 10 largest states, experienced record tourism in the first quarter of 2023, and outpaced nationwide job growth for the 25th consecutive month.

The Department of Commerce will continue to support Florida's robust economic development and growth through performance-driven job creation and capital investment grant programs, infrastructure grants, rural county and small city grants, broadband grants, small business and rural loan programs, and other small business programs.

Moreover, the Department of Commerce will continue to support and collaborate with Florida's family of economic development and workforce development partners, including Space Florida, CareerSource, Florida Housing Finance Corporation, VISIT FLORIDA, the Florida Sports Foundation, the Florida Defense Support Task Force, the REACH Office, the Florida Department of Education, and the State University System Board of Governors.