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Sicily’s Government Proposes a €150 Million Budget Package for Jobs, Farms and Public Services

The amendments would channel newly recognized state funds into hiring incentives, agriculture, water systems, hospital equipment and school cooling.

Monday, October 5, 2026



The Sicilian regional government has filed a new package of budget amendments that would direct an additional €150 million to businesses, employment programs, public services, agriculture, health care, schools and local recovery projects, regional President Renato Schifani said in Palermo on Monday.

The amendments were submitted to the Sicilian Regional Assembly, known by its Italian acronym Ars, as part of a budget variation bill. According to the regional government, the extra funds come after the Italian state, and in particular the Economy and Finance Ministry, recognized new sums owed to the region.

Schifani said the plan was drafted with regional Economy Councilor Alessandro Dagnino and drew on proposals from lawmakers in the governing majority as well as some ideas from the opposition. In a statement reported by Italpress, Schifani said the package was designed to respond to the needs of local communities and the productive economy, with support for companies that produce and hire, help for sectors under pressure from higher costs, and investment in services and younger people.

A large share of the package is aimed at agriculture, with nearly €50 million in total. That includes €10 million for extraordinary distillation, €20 million to support the wheat sector and €19 million for cantine sociali, or cooperative wineries. If approved, the wine-related measures could help absorb excess supply and ease financial pressure in one of Italy’s most important wine-producing regions, an issue that can spill over into the broader beverage sector through pricing, inventory and cash-flow strains.

Another €30 million is earmarked to offset high diesel costs. Of that amount, €15 million would go to non-scheduled car services, buses and taxis, €10 million to agricultural diesel and €5 million to the fishing sector. The regional government said the goal is to reduce operating costs that are weighing on business activity.

The amendments also expand labor support. The government said they would widen the group of companies eligible for decontribution aid, a form of relief tied to labor costs. The contribution for new hires would rise from 10% to 20%, and to 25% for employers who hire young people.

On essential services, the package includes €22 million for the water sector in addition to measures already approved for Aica and Ati Trapani. The new allocation includes €10 million for Ati Catania, €6 million for Ati Siracusa and €6 million for Iblea Acque. Another €22 million would go to provincial health authorities, known in Italy as Asp, for the purchase of medical equipment.

The plan also sets aside €16 million for air conditioning in schools and €3 million for a “merit income” program for university students with an average grade of at least 29. In Italy’s university system, grades are commonly measured on a 30-point scale.

Separate funding is directed at cleanup and prevention projects. The amendments provide €3 million for reclamation work in the Pistunina area of Messina, where a building collapsed in July. Another €1 million would finance a revolving fund for municipalities to clean uncultivated land as part of wildfire prevention efforts.

The measures are not yet in force and still require approval by the Sicilian legislature. Schifani called on the assembly to pass the package so that the money recognized by the state can be turned into what he described as concrete benefits for citizens and businesses.

The proposal comes as regional governments across Italy continue to use targeted budget changes to respond to higher energy and transport costs, pressure on farm incomes, and demands for stronger local services. In Sicily, the broad scope of the package shows an effort to address several political and economic pressures at once, from rural support and hiring incentives to health equipment, water networks and school infrastructure.