

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

2006 Regular Session

To: Universities and Colleges; Ways and Means

By: Representative Mayo, Hines, Masterson, Bailey, Burnett, Clark, Coleman (29th), Espy, Flaggs, Huddleston, Johnson, McBride, Morris, Perkins, Reynolds, Stevens, Straughter, Thomas, Whittington, Howell

House Bill 1034

(As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT TO ENACT THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION REVITALIZATION ACT OF 2006; TO MAKE LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS; TO CREATE THE SPECIAL TASK FORCE FOR REVITALIZATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION; TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE THAT THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTER BUREAU OF COMPREHENSIVE LONG-RANGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SHALL SERVE THE TASK FORCE; TO SET FORTH DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BUREAU, AND TO REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE STAFF AND OTHER SUPPORT TO THE BUREAU; TO PROVIDE THAT THE TASK FORCE SHALL FUNCTION AS AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH AND ANALYTICAL GROUP CHARGED WITH SETTING SHORT-RANGE AND LONG-RANGE GOALS FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA REGION; TO REQUIRE THE HOLDING OF PUBLIC HEARINGS IN THE REGION AND THE PREPARATION OF A LONG-RANGE ACTION PLAN FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF THE REGION AND SPECIFY THE PARTS OF THE PLAN; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. This act may be cited as the "Mississippi Delta Region Revitalization Act of 2006."

SECTION 2. (1) For purposes of this act, the Mississippi Delta Region, which may be hereinafter referred to as the region, shall be defined as the western section of the State of Mississippi that lies between the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers, encompassing in part or whole the counties of Bolivar, Carroll, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Warren, Washington, Yazoo, Jefferson and Claiborne.

(2) The Legislature finds that the prospective well-being of the people of the Mississippi Delta Region of the state requires that the economic and other development

of the region should be strategically, comprehensively and exhaustively planned and that the plan be systematically implemented. The Legislature further finds that the state should foster open communication between government and the private sectors of our economy in the Mississippi Delta Region and that the state should provide a policy, a vision and a framework to encourage an environment conducive to the revitalization of our state's Delta Region.

(3) The Legislature hereby declares that the public policy of this state requires an overall, comprehensive and coordinated plan for maximum and accelerated revitalization of the Mississippi Delta Region.

SECTION 3. (1) The Special Task Force for Revitalization of the Mississippi Delta Region is hereby created. The task force shall be composed of twenty-seven (27) members, to be appointed as follows:

(a) Four (4) members of the Mississippi House of Representatives who reside in the Mississippi Delta Region, and one (1) citizen member at large who is a resident of the Delta Region, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(b) Four (4) members of the Mississippi State Senate who reside in the Mississippi Delta Region, and one (1) citizen member at large who is a resident of the Delta Region, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

(c) Two (2) members from the state's public universities or from the state's community and junior colleges with a broad knowledge of research planning and community and economic development, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(d) Two (2) members from the state's public universities or from the state's community and junior colleges with a broad knowledge of research planning and community and economic development, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

(e) One (1) member from each of the following five (5) planning and development districts in the region: North Central Planning and Development District, North Delta Planning and Development District, South Planning and Development District, Southwest Planning and Development District and Central Planning and Development District. Each member from this paragraph (e) may or may not be municipal or county officials who are appointed by the respective board of directors, but must reside in the Mississippi Delta Region.

(f) One (1) member from the membership or staffs of the Mississippi Association of Supervisors and the Mississippi Municipal Association. These members will be appointed to the task force by the Governor from recommendations made to the board by the respective organizations.

(g) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority, or his designee.

(h) Five (5) members to be selected by the Governor, three (3) of whom shall be representatives of business or entrepreneurial enterprises in the Mississippi Delta Region.

(2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the task force will be organized, selected and constituted in such a way that it represents the most talented individuals who could possibly be assembled to address the concerns and issues associated with the revitalization of the Mississippi Delta Region. Task force members shall be appointed by May 1, 2006, and the task force shall have its organizational meeting no later than May 15, 2006. The task force shall elect from among its membership a chairman and vice chairman. Terms of service of task force members shall coincide with the duration of the task force.

(3) All persons selected for service on the task force shall be creative, knowledgeable and accomplished people with the capacity to contribute to the mission of the task force. Vacancies on the task force shall be filled in a manner consistent with original appointments.

SECTION 4. (1) The University Research Center Bureau of Comprehensive Long-Range Economic Development Planning shall serve the Special Task Force for Revitalization of the Mississippi Delta Region. The bureau shall:

(a) Provide staff support, including an employee to serve as the task force coordinator, to the task force and shall organize and coordinate the work of the task force.

(b) Make available office space for the task force to include conference room facilities.

(c) Be responsible for preparing and maintaining a long-range plan for the revitalization and economic and other development of the state's Delta Region. The plan shall be sufficiently broad in scope so as to address all regional, state, national and international economic, demographic, education, work force training, community, housing, public health, crime, natural resource and infrastructure factors relating to the overall status, revitalization and development of the Mississippi Delta Region.

(d) Work in coordination with the Mississippi Development Authority in all aspects of serving the task force.

(2) The Mississippi Development Authority shall provide any staff support to the bureau that it or the task force may request.

SECTION 5. The mission and role of the special task force shall be to function as an independent research and analytical group charged with setting measurable, achievable and significant goals to revitalize the Mississippi Delta Region. The task force shall conduct public hearings in the region and make recommendations regarding such goals and present findings and detailed recommendations which will enable the region to achieve the stated goals. Recommendations of the task force shall be specific to the

extent that actions needed are explicitly set out and supported with in-depth analyses as to the contributions such actions would have on the revitalization of the region. All recommendations shall be accompanied by specific requests with respect to allocation of resources, including any additional funding necessary to fund the revitalization activities.

SECTION 6. With research and recommendations prepared by the task force, the bureau shall prepare a long-range action plan for the revitalization of the region, which shall consist of five (5) parts as provided in this act.

SECTION 7. Part I of the plan will identify specific, quantifiable goals to be accomplished in the next succeeding five-, ten- and twenty-year periods. Before proposing the goals required for Part I of the plan, at least three (3) public hearings shall be held in each of the northern, central and southern portions of the region, in order to receive public input on the goal setting process and deliberations pertaining to that process.

The goals proposed by the bureau shall be reasonable, challenging, achievable and shall be expressed in measures of achievement that would represent comparative and significant economic progress and revitalization for the region.

SECTION 8. Part II of the economic development plan shall include:

(a) An inventory and analysis of the region's competitive advantages and an inventory and analysis of factors which tend to retard economic and other development in the region;

(b) Identification and analysis of state, national and international economic trends affecting the region's development; (c) An analysis and evaluation of the state's taxing effort as it affects the region's economic development and other efforts and an analysis of how economic development goals and objectives in the region relate to projected short- and long-term state and local revenues dedicated to the region and to the possible and potential impact on the region's revenue structure;

(d) An identification and analysis of key factors affecting economic development in the region;

(e) An identification and analysis of factors affecting industrial location and decisions affecting expansion of existing business and industry within the region;

(f) An analysis of the region's incentive programs and economic development strategies and a comparison with other regions of the state;

(g) An analysis of the region's work force and of the economic and educational conditions that the work force will face in future years;

(h) An analysis of and assessment of the minority business and commercial activity, capability, potential and needs in the region;

(i) An analysis of and assessment of income in the region by various income groups to provide the analytical base for developing programs and recommendations to address low income high unemployment problems in the region;

(j) An analysis and assessment of programs in other states and in the federal government which seek to foster, encourage and assist minority involvement in and contributions toward economic development. The programs to be assessed shall include, but not be limited to, set aside procurement programs.

SECTION 9. (1) Part III of the economic development plan shall provide a procedure for monitoring the implementation of efforts proposed by the task force and the plan. In formulating this procedure, the bureau will survey, identify and analyze every government program and private resource and activity that is available to, that is being applied toward or that contributes to the accomplishment of the goals set in the long-range plan. The resources and programs of local, state and federal government and private business shall be identified and analyzed to determine the specific areas in which they contribute to achievement of the overall goals.

(2) Each agency and institution of state government involved in economic, demographic, education, work force training, community, housing, public health, crime, natural resources and infrastructure aspects relating to the overall revitalization and development of the Mississippi Delta Region is directed to prepare and submit to the bureau and the Mississippi Development Authority, work programs covering its activities in the relevant aspects. The bureau shall specify a uniform format for agencies to follow in preparing their work programs. These work programs shall cover in general the next five (5) years of the plan and, in significant detail, the upcoming fiscal year. Work programs shall be submitted by October 1, 2006, for fiscal year 2007 by those agencies identified as being required to submit work programs.

SECTION 10. Part IV of the plan shall be an analysis and evaluation of materials in Parts II and III of the plan. This phase of the plan shall also make an overall evaluation of the relative contributions that the resources and efforts identified in Part III are making toward achievement of the overall goals. This phase of the plan shall contain specific recommendations for inclusion in the region's efforts:

(a) Specific programs for accelerating the region's overall economic development through greater results from the state's agricultural resources;

(b) Specific programs for rural areas of the region and those areas and identifiable groups of people with the highest unemployment and lowest per capita incomes;

(c) Specific programs for international trade and the attraction of foreign investment through development of specialized, university-based or other programs;

(d) The specific niches that Mississippi has and on which it should focus development efforts or those niches the region should seek to develop; and

(e) Specific minority enterprise assistance and development programs that would be needed and recommended.

SECTION 11. (1) Part V of the economic development plan shall consist of recommendations. The recommendations shall be based on Part IV of the plan and shall seek to improve in every possible and feasible manner the coordination and implementation of all activities and programs outlined and identified as required in Part III of the plan.

(2) The plan shall make recommendations regarding new initiatives and new programs and the alteration or expansion of existing programs as deemed necessary to achieve the goals established. The recommendations shall state specifically what is to be done, who is to do it and how it is to be done and shall also set out the cost benefits of each recommendation.

(3) The bureau, in consultation with the task force and the Mississippi Development Authority, shall develop a legislative package containing any statutory actions required to implement the goals established in the state long-range plan for economic development. The legislative package shall be prepared and presented in bill format.

SECTION 12. All parts of the plan shall be completed no later than December 1, 2006. A preliminary report on the status of the plan shall be made to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in November 2006.

SECTION 13. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage; and shall stand repealed on July 1, 2009.