

By: Representative Foster

To: Universities and
Colleges;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1221
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE REGIONAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM WITHIN THE
2 UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTER; TO PRESCRIBE THE PURPOSE OF THE
3 PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE FOR APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING AND THE CRITERIA
4 FOR FUNDING OF PROJECTS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROMULGATION OF RULES
5 AND REGULATIONS; TO AMEND SECTION 37-141-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
6 1972, TO CONFORM TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED
7 PURPOSES.

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

9 SECTION 1. (1) There is hereby created the Regional
10 Initiatives Program within the University Research Center as
11 created by Section 37-141-1 et seq.

12 (2) The program shall provide financial assistance to
13 counties through grants to substate economic development
14 organizations or an aggregate of such organizations to carry out
15 specific projects that will augment the objectives and strategies
16 of the statewide economic development plan in accordance with the
17 Statewide Planning Act of 1987.

18 (3) Counties may designate substate economic development
19 organizations to include but not limited to economic development
20 organizations such as local chambers of commerce, local economic
21 development authorities, planning development districts,
22 multicounty organizations funded by local governing authorities
23 and the federal government or other organization deemed
24 appropriate.

25 SECTION 2. (1) Applications for financial assistance shall
26 be made to the University Research Center.

27 (2) Applicants may request up to seventy-five percent (75%)
28 of the total projects cost. The applicant shall provide at least

29 twenty-five percent (25%) of the total cost, twelve and one-half
30 percent (12-1/2%) of which may be in in-kind funding.

31 SECTION 3. (1) No request for funds shall be granted unless
32 the project will have a positive economic impact on at least an
33 entire county.

34 (2) No funding provided by the University Research Center
35 shall be used to fund operating costs.

36 SECTION 4. The University Research Center shall develop
37 rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of
38 this act.

39 SECTION 5. Section 37-141-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
40 amended as follows:

41 37-141-7. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the
42 Legislature that the functions of the center shall include, but
43 not be limited to, the following:

44 (a) Undertaking selected applied research projects with
45 a permanent research staff, augmented by specialists from
46 universities and colleges, government agencies and private firms,
47 assisted by graduate students.

48 (b) Relating, when applicable, public service-related
49 research and technical assistance activities at all state
50 universities to the overall statewide economic development plan.

51 (c) Coordinating economic development related
52 activities among all state universities.

53 (d) Providing a computer facility for use by all
54 educational institutions and government agencies.

55 (e) Maintaining current information on research
56 projects in the state; on scientific and research personnel; on
57 research expenditures and sources of funds; on research programs
58 of agencies and institutions outside the state which bear upon
59 Mississippi development; publishing annually a catalogue of this
60 information; and otherwise functioning as a research clearinghouse
61 for the State of Mississippi.

62 (f) Developing a list of priority research projects
63 that would have significant contribution to advancement of
64 economic development efforts in the state.

65 (g) Coordinating with universities and other entities

66 in the state to promote completion of the priority economic
67 development related research projects with economic development
68 potential and advising and assisting in the securing of needed
69 research funding.

70 (h) Contracting with universities and other entities to
71 effect needed priority economic development related research
72 projects.

73 (i) Providing printing and data processing support to
74 the Department of Economic Development.

75 (j) Identifying all federal funds that flow into
76 Mississippi for any and all purposes, making comparisons with
77 other states and preparing appropriate analyses to identify
78 sources of federal funds where potential exists for attracting and
79 obtaining larger amounts of federal funds for the state.

80 (k) Develop a system whereby economic development
81 related research results can be disseminated to public and private
82 entities for the purpose of enhancing economic development
83 efforts, particularly at the local level.

84 (l) Assisting institutions, organizations and firms in
85 identifying and obtaining research funds and other grants from
86 public and private sources.

87 (m) Developing an econometric model of Mississippi
88 designed to forecast various sectors of the Mississippi economy.

89 (n) Supporting and utilizing the Mississippi Automated
90 Resource Information System (MARIS) to accomplish its objectives
91 of gathering, maintaining and disseminating information and
92 providing research assistance.

93 (o) Performing other duties and responsibilities as
94 assigned by the Commissioner of Higher Education.

95 (p) Carrying out the provisions of Sections 1 through 4
96 of House Bill No. 1221, 1999 Regular Session.

97 SECTION 6. This act shall take effect and be in force from
98 and after July 1, 1999.