HOUSE BILL NO. 548

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 65-31-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT THE MISSISSIPPI TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION SHALL LOCATE, DESIGN, CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN A HOSPITALITY STATION AT A CERTAIN LOCATION ALONG U.S. HIGHWAY 98 IN GEORGE COUNTY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 65-31-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

65-31-1. (1) The Mississippi Transportation Commission is hereby authorized to locate, design, construct, operate, and maintain hospitality stations on trunkline highways at or near points of entry into this state from other states. Subject to the availability of federal, state or local funds, or funds from any other source, the Mississippi Transportation Commission shall locate, design, construct, operate and maintain a hospitality station in George County on or along U.S. Highway 98 approximately eleven (11) miles west of the Mississippi/Alabama state line.

In carrying out the provisions of this chapter, the commission shall have authority to employ such engineers, architects, skilled and unskilled labor as may be determined necessary by the commission, for the preparation of plans for such hospitality stations and their proper location, design, construction, maintenance, and operation. The commission also may employ full-time security officers, as authorized under Section 65-1-131, and/or may contract for the employment of private security officers, as authorized under Section 65-1-136, to patrol and protect the property of hospitality stations and visitors, patrons and other employees of hospitality stations.
Prior to the location of such hospitality stations the commission shall afford the opportunity for a public hearing in the county wherein such hospitality station is to be located for the purpose of receiving testimony regarding the most feasible and advantageous location for such hospitality station, at which hearing all interested persons may appear and present testimony in regard thereto. A notice of such proposed location shall be given in some newspaper published or having general circulation in the county wherein such hospitality station is proposed to be located. Should a public hearing be requested thereon, notice by publication shall be given at least ten (10) days prior to the date upon which public hearing is to be held and written notice thereof shall likewise be given, within said time, to the governing authorities of all municipalities within such county and the governing authority of such county.

Each hospitality station constructed under the provisions of this chapter shall be maintained and kept in a neat and attractive condition.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.