SENATE BILL NO. 2946

AN ACT TO STUDY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM WHICH SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY; TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SHALL STUDY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A REGIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE DISTRICT IN THE COUNTIES OF ADAMS, CLAIBORNE, HINDS, JEFFERSON, MADISON, RANKIN, WARREN AND WILKINSON; TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY SHALL SUBMIT A PLAN REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH DISTRICT TO THE LEGISLATURE WITHIN 12 MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ACT; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF A TASK FORCE TO REVIEW THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH PLAN; TO GRANT THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY CERTAIN POWERS WITH REGARD TO ITS DUTIES UNDER THIS ACT; TO REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH RESPECT TO OTHER AREAS IN THIS STATE WHERE SUCH DISTRICTS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE AND VULABLE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The purpose of this act is to enact a pilot program to develop a regional cultural heritage tourism district program which shall be administered and staffed by the Mississippi Development Authority.

(2) The regional cultural heritage tourism district pilot program shall include Adams, Claiborne, Hinds, Jefferson, Madison, Rankin, Warren and Wilkinson Counties.

SECTION 2. Within twelve (12) months after the effective date of this act, the Mississippi Development Authority shall develop and submit to the Legislature a plan that:

(a) Determines the need for a regional cultural heritage tourism district that includes the counties listed in Section 1(2) of this act;

(b) Specifies the goals and objectives for such regional cultural heritage tourism district;
(c) Provides an inventory of the significant cultural and historic resources in such regional cultural heritage tourism district;

(d) Identifies legal, regulatory and other constraints which must be overcome before meaningful cultural and historic development can occur;

(e) Describes current and potential educational, interpretative and recreational programs and projects concerning such regional cultural heritage tourism district;

(f) Provides market research to document the potential regional tourism and economic development opportunities resulting from the development of such regional cultural heritage tourism district;

(g) Provides an economic assessment of the long- and short-term costs and benefits related to the implementation of the plan, including an identification of expected sources of funding;

(h) Describes the specific cost effective techniques or methods for the long-term preservation and documentation of the significant cultural and historic resources in such regional cultural heritage tourism district;

(i) Describes the public and private organizational structure to be utilized for planning, development and management of such regional cultural heritage tourism district; and

(j) Provides strategies and a schedule for the planning, development and management of such regional cultural heritage tourism district.

SECTION 3. For the purpose of reviewing the development of the plan for the regional cultural heritage tourism district, there shall be a task force that includes one (1) representative appointed by each of the following:

(a) The boards of supervisors of Adams, Claiborne, Hinds, Jefferson, Madison, Rankin, Warren and Wilkinson Counties;
(b) The mayors of each municipality in the proposed regional cultural heritage tourism district;
(c) The Executive Director of the Department of Archives and History;
(d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority;
(e) The Executive Director of the Department of Transportation;
(f) The Executive Director of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks;
(g) The President of Alcorn State University;
(h) The President of Jackson State University;
(i) The Director of the Mississippi Arts Commission;
(j) The Chairman of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission;
(k) The Regional Superintendent of the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service;
(l) Other representatives as the Mississippi Development Authority deems appropriate.

SECTION 4. For purposes of this act, the Mississippi Development Authority shall be authorized:
(a) To advocate, coordinate, develop, plan, promote and research cultural and historical attractions, events, properties and services in the proposed regional cultural heritage tourism district;
(b) To enter into such contracts and cooperative agreements with the local, state and federal government with agencies of such governments, with private individuals, and with corporations, associations and other organizations, as the authority may deem necessary or convenient; and
(c) To provide grants to fund the cost of construction, preservation, restoration, renovation, repair, investigation, promotion or interpretation of cultural and historic attractions,
events, properties and services within the proposed regional
cultural heritage tourism district.

SECTION 5. In addition to the duties and powers given to the
Mississippi Development Authority in the foregoing provisions of
this act, the authority shall survey cultural and historical
attractions, events, properties and services within other
identifiable geographic regions throughout this state to determine
other areas in which it would be viable and appropriate to
establish regional cultural heritage tourism districts similar to
the pilot district authorized in this act. The authority shall
submit a report of its findings to the Legislature on or before
December 1, 2002, by filing a report thereon with the Secretary of
the Mississippi Senate, the Clerk of the Mississippi House of
Representatives, the Chairman of the Senate Economic Development,
Tourism and Parks Committee and the Chairman of the House
Appropriations Committee.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2001.