SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 574

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO CREATE A STUDY TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC INITIATIVE FOR FOREST-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; TO DIRECT THE TASK FORCE TO MAKE A WRITTEN REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2001; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi has significant and abundant forest lands; and

WHEREAS, forests are a vital part of the state's economy, character and heritage; and

WHEREAS, forests define our state's natural environment by supporting animal and plant life, and by contributing to the quality of the water and soil of the state; and

WHEREAS, the forests of the state provide our citizens with recreational, cultural and aesthetic pleasures; and

WHEREAS, the forest industry has long employed countless citizens, supported many of the state's communities, and contributes to the state's economy and trade; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for a comprehensive, coordinated strategic plan to maximize the potential of our state's forest resources; and

WHEREAS, the Forestry and Wildlife Research Center at Mississippi State University, the Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Forestry Commission and others have individually studied and made recommendations on various initiatives to improve the use of our state forests:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURING THEREIN, That a joint special study task force is created to study and make...
recommendations regarding a comprehensive and strategic economic
development forestry initiative. The committee shall be composed
of two members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by
the Speaker of the House and two members of the Senate to be
appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, the Commissioner of
Agriculture and Commerce, the State Forester of the Mississippi
Forestry Commission, the Executive Vice President of the
Mississippi Forestry Association, the Executive Director of the
Mississippi Development Authority, the Director of the Forestry
and Wildlife Center at Mississippi State University, the Executive
Director of the Polymer Science Center at the University of
Southern Mississippi, the Chairman of the Delta Council's wildlife
committee, and the following to be appointed by the Lieutenant
Governor: a representative of the nonindustrial, private forest
landowners, a representative of the logging industry, a
representative of primary (wood) manufacturing, a representative
of the pulp and paper manufacturing industry and a representative
of the Nature Conservancy. The task force shall be co-chaired by
the Director of the Forestry and Wildlife Research Center and a
co-chairman selected by the Lieutenant Governor.

Within ten days after the last day of the 2001 Regular
Session of the Legislature, the Speaker and the Lieutenant
Governor shall appoint the members of the task force. Within ten
days after the members are appointed, the membership shall meet on
a date mutually agreed upon by the co-chairmen for the purpose of
organizing the task force and establishing rules for transacting
its business and keeping records. A majority of the members of
the task force shall constitute a quorum at all task force
meetings. An affirmative vote of a majority of the members voting
shall be required in the adoption of rules, resolutions and
reports, and in any other actions taken by the task force. All
members of the task force shall be notified in writing of all
regular and special meetings of the task force, which notices
shall be mailed at least five days before the dates of the meetings. The task force shall hold a minimum of three regular meetings.

The task force shall make a written report of its findings and recommendations, and shall mail copies of the report to each member and member-elect of the Legislature not later than December 1, 2001.

For attending meetings of the task force, each legislative member shall be paid, from the Contingent Expense Fund of the member's respective house, per diem compensation in the amount authorized by Section 25-3-69, Mississippi Code of 1972, and a mileage allowance and an expense allowance in the amount authorized by Section 5-1-47, Mississippi Code of 1972. However, no per diem compensation, mileage allowance or expense allowance shall be paid for attending meetings of the task force while the Legislature is in session, and no per diem compensation, mileage allowance or expense allowance shall be paid without prior approval of the proper committee in the member's respective house.

All expenses incurred by and on behalf of the task force shall be paid from funds made available by the House Management Committee and the Senate Management Committee from the Contingent Expense Fund of each respective house, from any funds appropriated for the purpose of this resolution and from any grants or contributions made to the committee for its purpose.

In carrying out the provisions of this resolution, the task force may utilize the services, facilities and personnel of all departments, agencies, offices and institutions of the state. The staff of the Special Task Force for Economic Development Planning will serve as the coordinator for the work of the Task Force for the Strategic Initiative for Forest-Based Economic Development.