SENATE BILL NO. 2858
(As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 69-2-13, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO DRAW $21,000,000.00 FROM THE EMERGING CROPS FUND TO PROVIDE LOANS AND LOAN GUARANTIES TO OR ON BEHALF OF ANY AGRIBUSINESS ENTERPRISE ENGAGED IN BEEF PROCESSING FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGING THE EXTENSION OF CONVENTIONAL FINANCING AND THE ISSUANCE OF LETTERS OF CREDIT TO SUCH AGRIBUSINESS ENTERPRISES BY PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS; TO EXTEND THE REPEALER ON MONIES MADE AVAILABLE TO THE AGRIBUSINESS AND NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER AT ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY FROM THE EMERGING CROPS FUND; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 69-2-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

69-2-13. (1) There is hereby established in the State Treasury a fund to be known as the "Emerging Crops Fund," which shall be used to pay the interest on loans made to farmers for nonland capital costs of establishing production of emerging crops on land in Mississippi, and to make loans and grants which are authorized under this section to be made from the fund. The fund shall be administered by the Mississippi Development Authority. A board comprised of the directors of the authority, the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service, the Mississippi Small Farm Development Center and the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, or their designees, shall develop definitions, guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this chapter. Funds for the Emerging Crops Fund shall be provided from the issuance of bonds or notes under Sections 69-2-19 through 69-2-37 and from repayment of interest loans made from the fund.

(2) (a) The Mississippi Development Authority shall develop a program which gives fair consideration to making loans for the
processing and manufacturing of goods and services by
agribusiness, greenhouse production horticulture, and small
business concerns. It is the policy of the State of Mississippi
that the Mississippi Development Authority shall give due
recognition to and shall aid, counsel, assist and protect, insofar
as is possible, the interests of agribusiness, greenhouse
production horticulture, and small business concerns. To ensure
that the purposes of this subsection are carried out, the
Mississippi Development Authority shall loan not more than One
Million Dollars ($1,000,000.00) to finance any single
agribusiness, greenhouse production horticulture, or small
business concern. Loans made pursuant to this subsection shall be
made in accordance with the criteria established in Section
57-71-11.

(b) The Mississippi Development Authority may, out of
the total amount of bonds authorized to be issued under this
chapter, make available funds to any planning and development
district in accordance with the criteria established in Section
57-71-11. Planning and development districts which receive monies
pursuant to this provision shall use such monies to make loans to
private companies for purposes consistent with this subsection.

(c) The Mississippi Development Authority is hereby
authorized to engage legal services, financial advisors,
appraisers and consultants if needed to review and close loans
made hereunder and to establish and assess reasonable fees
including, but not limited to, liquidation expenses.

(3) (a) The Mississippi Development Authority shall, in
addition to the other programs described in this section, provide
for a program of loans to be made to agribusiness or greenhouse
production horticulture enterprises for the purpose of encouraging
thereby the extension of conventional financing and the issuance
of letters of credit to such agribusiness or greenhouse production
horticulture enterprises by private institutions. Monies to make
such loans by the Mississippi Development Authority shall be drawn from the Emerging Crops Fund. The amount of a loan to any single agribusiness or greenhouse production horticulture enterprise under this paragraph (a) shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total cost of the project for which financing is sought or Two Hundred Thousand Dollars ($200,000.00), whichever is less. No interest shall be charged on such loans, and only the amount actually loaned shall be required to be repaid. Repayments shall be deposited into the Emerging Crops Fund.

(b) The Mississippi Development Authority shall, in addition to the other programs described in this section, provide for a program of loans or loan guaranties, or both, to be made to or on behalf of any agribusiness enterprise engaged in beef processing for the purpose of encouraging thereby the extension of conventional financing and the issuance of letters of credit to such agribusiness enterprises by private institutions. Monies to make such loans or loan guaranties, or both, by the Mississippi Development Authority shall be drawn from the Emerging Crops Fund and shall not exceed Twenty-one Million Dollars ($21,000,000.00) in the aggregate. The amount of a loan to any single agribusiness enterprise or loan guaranty on behalf of such agribusiness enterprise, or both, under this paragraph (b) shall not exceed the total cost of the project for which financing is sought or Twenty-one Million Dollars ($21,000,000.00), whichever is less. The interest charged on a loan made under this paragraph (b) shall be at a rate determined by the Mississippi Development Authority. All repayments of any loan made under this paragraph (b) shall be deposited into the Emerging Crops Fund. Assistance received by an agribusiness enterprise under this paragraph (b) shall not disqualify the agribusiness enterprise from obtaining any other assistance under this chapter.

(4) (a) Through June 30, 2003, the Mississippi Development Authority may loan or grant to qualified planning and development
districts, and to small business investment corporations, bank-based community development corporations, the Recruitment and Training Program, Inc., the City of Jackson Business Development Loan Fund, the Lorman Southwest Mississippi Development Corporation, the West Jackson Community Development Corporation, the East Mississippi Development Corporation, and other entities meeting the criteria established by the Mississippi Development Authority (all referred to hereinafter as "qualified entities"), funds for the purpose of establishing loan revolving funds to assist in providing financing for minority economic development. The monies loaned or granted by the Mississippi Development Authority shall be drawn from the Emerging Crops Fund and shall not exceed Twenty-three Million Dollars ($23,000,000.00) in the aggregate. Planning and development districts or qualified entities which receive monies pursuant to this provision shall use such monies to make loans to minority business enterprises consistent with criteria established by the Mississippi Development Authority. Such criteria shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(i) The business enterprise must be a private, for-profit enterprise.

(ii) If the business enterprise is a proprietorship, the borrower must be a resident citizen of the State of Mississippi; if the business enterprise is a corporation or partnership, at least fifty percent (50%) of the owners must be resident citizens of the State of Mississippi.

(iii) The borrower must have at least five percent (5%) equity interest in the business enterprise.

(iv) The borrower must demonstrate ability to repay the loan.

(v) The borrower must not be in default of any previous loan from the state or federal government.
(vi) Loan proceeds may be used for financing all project costs associated with development or expansion of a new small business, including fixed assets, working capital, start-up costs, rental payments, interest expense during construction and professional fees related to the project.

(vii) Loan proceeds shall not be used to pay off existing debt for loan consolidation purposes; to finance the acquisition, construction, improvement or operation of real property which is to be held primarily for sale or investment; to provide for, or free funds, for speculation in any kind of property; or as a loan to owners, partners or stockholders of the applicant which do not change ownership interest by the applicant. However, this does not apply to ordinary compensation for services rendered in the course of business.

(viii) The maximum amount that may be loaned to any one (1) borrower shall be Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($250,000.00).

(ix) The Mississippi Development Authority shall review each loan before it is made, and no loan shall be made to any borrower until the loan has been reviewed and approved by the Mississippi Development Authority.

(b) For the purpose of this subsection, the term "minority business enterprise" means a socially and economically disadvantaged small business concern, organized for profit, performing a commercially useful function which is owned and controlled by one or more minorities or minority business enterprises certified by the Mississippi Development Authority, at least fifty percent (50%) of whom are resident citizens of the State of Mississippi. For purposes of this subsection, the term "socially and economically disadvantaged small business concern" shall have the meaning ascribed to such term under the Small Business Act (15 USCS, Section 637(a)), or women, and the term "owned and controlled" means a business in which one or more
minorities or minority business enterprises certified by the Mississippi Development Authority own sixty percent (60%) or, in the case of a corporation, sixty percent (60%) of the voting stock, and control sixty percent (60%) of the management and daily business operations of the business.

From and after July 1, 2003, monies not loaned or granted by the Mississippi Development Authority to planning and development districts or qualified entities under this subsection, and monies not loaned by planning and development districts or qualified entities, shall be deposited to the credit of the sinking fund created and maintained in the State Treasury for the retirement of bonds issued under Section 69-2-19.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection to the contrary, if federal funds are not available for commitments made by a planning and development district to provide assistance under any federal loan program administered by the Appalachian Regional Commission or Economic Development Administration, or both, a planning and development district may use funds in its loan revolving fund, which have not been committed otherwise to provide assistance, for the purpose of providing temporary funding for such commitments. If a planning and development district uses uncommitted funds in its loan revolving fund to provide such temporary funding, the district shall use funds repaid to the district under the temporarily funded federal loan program to replenish the funds used to provide the temporary funding. Funds used by a planning and development district to provide temporary funding under this paragraph (c) must be repaid to the district's loan revolving fund no later than twelve (12) months after the date the district provides the temporary funding. A planning and development district may not use uncommitted funds in its loan revolving fund to provide temporary funding under this paragraph (c) on more than two (2)
occasions during a calendar year. A planning and development
district may provide temporary funding for multiple commitments on
each such occasion. The maximum aggregate amount of uncommitted
funds in a loan revolving fund that may be used for such purposes
during a calendar year shall not exceed seventy percent (70%) of
the uncommitted funds in the loan revolving fund on the date the
district first provides temporary funding during the calendar
year.

(d) If the Mississippi Development Authority determines
that a planning and development district or qualified entity has
provided loans to minority businesses in a manner inconsistent
with the provisions of this subsection, then the amount of such
loans so provided shall be withheld by the Mississippi Development
Authority from any additional grant funds to which the planning
and development district or qualified entity becomes entitled
under this subsection. If the Mississippi Development Authority
determines, after notifying such planning and development district
or qualified entity twice in writing and providing such planning
and development district or qualified entity a reasonable
opportunity to comply, that a planning and development district or
qualified entity has consistently failed to comply with this
subsection, the Mississippi Development Authority may declare such
planning and development district or qualified entity in default
under this subsection and, upon receipt of notice thereof from the
Mississippi Development Authority, such planning and development
district or qualified entity shall immediately cease providing
loans under this subsection, shall refund to the Mississippi
Development Authority for distribution to other planning and
development districts or qualified entities all funds held in its
revolving loan fund and, if required by the Mississippi
Development Authority, shall convey to the Mississippi Development
Authority, all administrative and management control of loans
provided by it under this subsection.
(e) If the Mississippi Development Authority determines, after notifying a planning and development district or qualified entity twice in writing and providing copies of such notification to each member of the Legislature in whose district or in a part of whose district such planning and development district or qualified entity is located and providing such planning and development district or qualified entity a reasonable opportunity to take corrective action, that a planning and development district or qualified entity administering a revolving loan fund under the provisions of this subsection is not actively engaged in lending as defined by the rules and regulations of the Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Development Authority may declare such planning and development district or qualified entity in default under this subsection and, upon receipt of notice thereof from the Mississippi Development Authority, such planning and development district or qualified entity shall immediately cease providing loans under this subsection, shall refund to the Mississippi Development Authority for distribution to other planning and development districts or qualified entities all funds held in its revolving loan fund and, if required by the Mississippi Development Authority, shall convey to the Mississippi Development Authority all administrative and management control of loans provided by it under this subsection.

(5) The Mississippi Development Authority shall develop a program which will assist minority business enterprises by guaranteeing bid, performance and payment bonds which such minority businesses are required to obtain in order to contract with federal agencies, state agencies or political subdivisions of the state. Monies for such program shall be drawn from the monies allocated under subsection (4) of this section to assist the financing of minority economic development and shall not exceed Three Million Dollars ($3,000,000.00) in the aggregate. The Mississippi Development Authority may promulgate rules and
regulations for the operation of the program established pursuant
to this subsection. For the purpose of this subsection (5) the
term "minority business enterprise" has the meaning assigned such
term in subsection (4) of this section.

(6) The Mississippi Development Authority may loan or grant
to public entities and to nonprofit corporations funds to defray
the expense of financing (or to match any funds available from
other public or private sources for the expense of financing)
projects in this state which are devoted to the study, teaching
and/or promotion of regional crafts and which are deemed by the
authority to be significant tourist attractions. The monies
loaned or granted shall be drawn from the Emerging Crops Fund and
shall not exceed Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($250,000.00)
in the aggregate.

(7) Through June 30, 1998, the Mississippi Development
Authority shall make available to the Mississippi Department of
Agriculture and Commerce funds for the purpose of establishing
loan revolving funds and other methods of financing for
agribusiness programs administered under the Mississippi
Agribusiness Council Act of 1993. The monies made available by
the Mississippi Development Authority shall be drawn from the
Emerging Crops Fund and shall not exceed Seven Hundred Thousand
Dollars ($700,000.00) in the aggregate. The Mississippi
Department of Agriculture and Commerce shall establish control and
auditing procedures for use of these funds. These funds will be
used primarily for quick payment to farmers for vegetable and
fruit crops processed and sold through vegetable processing plants
associated with the Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the
Mississippi State Extension Service.

(8) From and after July 1, 1996, the Mississippi Development
Authority shall make available to the Mississippi Small Farm
Development Center One Million Dollars ($1,000,000.00) to be used
by the center to assist small entrepreneurs as provided in Section

(9) The Mississippi Development Authority shall make available to the Agribusiness and Natural Resource Development Center through Alcorn State University an amount not to exceed Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($250,000.00) in fiscal year 2001 and Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($250,000.00) in fiscal year 2002 from the cash balance of the Emerging Crops Fund to support the development of a cooperative program for agribusiness development, marketing and natural resources development. This subsection (9) shall stand repealed on June 30, 2003.

(10) The Mississippi Development Authority shall make available to the Small Farm Development Center at Alcorn State University funds in an aggregate amount not to exceed Three Hundred Thousand Dollars ($300,000.00), to be drawn from the cash balance of the Emerging Crops Fund. The Small Farm Development Center at Alcorn State University shall use such funds to make loans to producers of sweet potatoes and cooperatives anywhere in the State of Mississippi owned by sweet potato producers to assist in the planting of sweet potatoes and the purchase of sweet potato production and harvesting equipment. A report of the loans made under this subsection shall be furnished by January 15 of each year to the Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

(11) The Mississippi Development Authority shall make available to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce "Make Mississippi Mine" program an amount not to exceed One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($150,000.00) to be drawn from the cash balance of the Emerging Crops Fund.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.