

By: Representative Robinson (84th)

To: Public Utilities

HOUSE BILL NO. 1568

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 77-15-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN LOCAL NATURAL GAS DISTRICTS THAT ARE
3 DISTRIBUTING A PORTION OF THEIR REVENUES TO MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN
4 THE DISTRICT SHALL CONTINUE TO MAKE SUCH DISTRIBUTIONS TO THE
5 MUNICIPALITIES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 77-15-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 77-15-1. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the
10 contrary, all local natural gas districts containing two (2) or
11 more municipalities and nonmunicipal customers shall establish and
12 maintain a board of directors composed of: (a) the mayors of each
13 municipality within the district whose terms shall be concurrent
14 with their terms of office as mayor; and (b) one (1) system-user
15 from each county within the district, who shall not be a public
16 official. The county system-user board members shall be elected
17 by the system-users residing outside of a municipality, in the
18 county in which such board member resides. In order to qualify as
19 a candidate for election to the board, each person shall obtain,
20 on a petition, twenty-five (25) signatures from system-users in
21 the county in which such person resides. The signatures shall be
22 of system-users residing outside of a municipality and the
23 candidate shall be a system-user who resides outside of a
24 municipality. The board shall call an election within fifteen
25 (15) days after July 1, 1989, to be held within sixty (60) days
26 from the date such election is called. Those persons elected to
27 the board shall serve until the next general election for
28 supervisors and the election for such board members thereafter

29 shall be held at the same time as the supervisor elections and the
30 terms of such board members shall be concurrent with the terms of
31 the supervisors. Any mayor who devotes a substantial amount of
32 time to the operations of a local natural gas district may receive
33 additional compensation as approved by the board of directors.
34 Board members who are mayors shall be entitled to travel expenses
35 as provided by Section 25-3-41 for all board meetings and shall be
36 entitled to compensation to be determined by the board, but not
37 more than One Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$1,250.00) per
38 month. Board members who are elected county system-users shall be
39 entitled to receive Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) for each day for
40 meetings attended and travel expenses as provided in Section
41 25-3-41. Such compensation and travel expenses shall be paid out
42 of any available funds of the district and shall be in addition to
43 any compensation paid by a municipality to a mayor on the board.
44 All board members shall file any required statements of economic
45 interest with the Ethics Commission as required by law. This
46 section shall not apply to any local natural gas district which
47 leases its distribution system to an investor-owned utility
48 company regulated by the Public Service Commission.

49 Any revenues of the district that the board of directors, on
50 the effective date of House Bill No. _____, 2004, are being
51 distributed to municipalities within the district shall continue
52 to be distributed to such municipalities.

53 **SECTION 2.** The Attorney General of the State of Mississippi
54 shall submit this act, immediately upon approval by the Governor,
55 or upon approval by the Legislature subsequent to a veto, to the
56 Attorney General of the United States or to the United States
57 District Court for the District of Columbia in accordance with the
58 provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended and
59 extended.

60 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
61 and after the date it is effectuated under Section 5 of the Voting
62 Rights Act of 1965, as amended and extended.