

April 21, 2005

TO THE MISSISSIPPI STATE SENATE:

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE FOR SENATE BILL 3150

I am returning Senate Bill 3150: "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 2, CHAPTER 170, LAWS OF 1922, AS AMENDED, TO PAY THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE YAZOO-MISSISSIPPI DELTA LEVEE BOARD A SALARY INSTEAD OF PER DIEM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES" without my approval and assign the following reasons for my veto.

After full consideration, I am vetoing Senate Bill 3150. For many years, levee boards in Mississippi have worked to provide flood protection for the people of our state. To support this, their primary mission and the reason for their existence, levee boards have generated revenue through taxes and lease payments. It is reasonable to expect these revenues to be used for flood control purposes. However, Senate Bill 3150 allows one levee board, the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board, to use its revenues to pay a salary to its vice president, a position which is not a full-time job.

I am concerned that such a policy would set a bad precedent for other elected and appointed boards in the state. While it is not uncommon for an elected or appointed board to hire a full-time, salaried staff, I am unaware of any similarly situated board which pays a part-time member a full-time salary.

Paying a part-time board member a full-time salary is not a justified expenditure of taxpayer dollars. If the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board has excess money in its coffers, it should first consider reducing the burden on those who generate the revenues.

For these reasons, I urge the members to sustain the veto and reject Senate Bill 3150.

Respectfully submitted,

Haley Barbour  
Governor