By: Representative Miles

To: Transportation

HOUSE BILL NO. 408

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE MISSISSIPPI TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS AND THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES OF MUNICIPALITIES TO CONSTRUCT, INDIVIDUALLY OR 3 4 JOINTLY WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES, TOLL ROAD OR TOLL BRIDGE PROJECTS WITHIN THE STATE; TO AUTHORIZE THE MISSISSIPPI 5 6 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS AND THE 7 GOVERNING AUTHORITIES OF MUNICIPALITIES TO CONTRACT WITH ANY 8 PERSON, CORPORATION OR OTHER BUSINESS LICENSED TO DO BUSINESS IN 9 THE STATE FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING TOLL ROADS OR BRIDGES; TO PRESCRIBE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE LETTING OF SUCH 10 11 CONTRACTS AND THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE PARTIES ENTERING INTO SUCH CONTRACTS; TO AUTHORIZE COUNTIES, CITIES AND THE STATE TO 12 ISSUE REVENUE BONDS TO FINANCE TOLL ROAD AND TOLL BRIDGE PROJECTS; 13 TO AMEND SECTION 65-3-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY 14 TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES. 15 16 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI: 17 18 boards of supervisors and/or the governing authorities of 19 municipalities (hereinafter referred to as governmental entities), 20 in their discretion, may construct, operate and maintain, 21 individually or jointly with other governmental entities, one or 22 more new toll roads or toll bridges in the state for motor vehicle traffic, including toll booths and related facilities, at and 23 24 along such locations where an alternate untolled route exists. 25 All such highways, pavement, bridges, drainage related structures and other infrastructure comprising the projects shall be built 26 27 and maintained in accordance with not less than the minimum highway design, construction and maintenance standards established 28 29 by the contracting governmental entity for such highways, infrastructure and facilities. 30

SECTION 2. (1) In addition to and as an alternative to any

other authority granted by law including, but not limited to,

Section 1 of this act, any governmental entities, as defined in

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Section 1 of this act, in their discretion, may contract, 34 35 individually or jointly with other governmental entities, with any 36 persons, corporations, partnerships or other businesses licensed 37 to do business in the State of Mississippi (hereinafter referred 38 to as "companies" or "company") for the purpose of designing, 39 financing, constructing, operating and maintaining one or more new 40 toll roads or toll bridges in the state for motor vehicle traffic, including toll booths and related facilities, at and along such 41 locations where an alternate untolled route exists. 42 43 contracts shall provide that land held by the governmental 44 entities, whether in fee simple, as an easement or other interest, shall be leased or assigned to a company for design, construction, 45 46 operation and maintenance of roadways, highways or bridges for motor vehicle traffic, toll booths and related facilities. 47 48 such highways, pavement, bridges, drainage related structures and other infrastructure comprising the projects shall be built and 49 50 maintained in accordance with not less than the minimum highway design, construction and maintenance standards established by the 51 contracting governmental entity for such highways, infrastructure 52 53 The contracting governmental entity shall conduct and facilities. periodic inspections of any such project throughout the term of 54 55 the contract to ensure compliance by the company. Failure of a company to comply with minimum standards established for the 56 57 project by the contracting governmental entity shall constitute a 58 breach and shall subject the company to liability on its bond or security or to rescission of the contract in accordance with the 59 60 terms and provisions of the contract. Every contract entered into by a governmental entity 61 (2) under this section shall require a company to enter into bond and 62

necessary or advisable to ensure timely completion and proper execution and performance of the contract. The governmental entities are authorized to acquire such property or interests in H. B. No. 408 *HR40/R461*
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provide such security as the governmental entity determines may be

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- 67 property as may be necessary, by gift, purchase or eminent domain,
- 68 for construction and maintenance of the highways or bridges built
- 69 pursuant to contracts entered into under this section. Upon
- 70 expiration, termination or rescission of the contract, all
- 71 interests that the company may have in the land, infrastructure,
- 72 facilities or other improvements to the property subject to
- 73 contract shall terminate and automatically, by operation of law,
- 74 be returned or conveyed to and vest in the State of Mississippi or
- 75 the contracting governmental entity. Upon termination, expiration
- 76 or rescission of the contract, the collection of tolls shall cease
- 77 after all associated debts have been retired or released.
- 78 (3) During the term of any contract entered into under this
- 79 section, the company may establish, charge and collect motor
- 80 vehicle operators tolls for use of the highway and its facilities.
- 81 The amount of such tolls, and any modification thereto, shall be
- 82 subject to approval by the contracting governmental entity;
- 83 however, all such contracts entered into with the Mississippi
- 84 Transportation Commission may require a company to pay a
- 85 percentage of all tolls collected to the Mississippi Department of
- 86 Transportation. All such tolls paid to the department shall be
- 87 deposited into the special bond sinking fund under Section 5 of
- 88 this act and may be expended only as authorized by the
- 89 Legislature.
- 90 (4) All statutes of this state relating to traffic
- 91 regulation and control shall be applicable to motor vehicles
- 92 operated upon highways and bridges constructed under this section
- 93 and shall be enforceable by the Mississippi Department of Public
- 94 Safety, the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol or any other law
- 95 enforcement agency having jurisdiction over such highways and
- 96 bridges.
- 97 (5) The State of Mississippi, the Mississippi Transportation
- 98 Commission, the Mississippi Department of Transportation,
- 99 counties, municipalities or any other agency or political

100 subdivision, or any officer or employee thereof, shall not be 101 liable for any tortious act or omission arising out of the construction, maintenance or operation of any highway or bridge 102 103 project under the provisions of this section where the act or 104 omission occurs during the term of any such contract entered into 105 by the Mississippi Transportation Commission or other governmental 106 entity and a company.

(6) The powers conferred by this section shall be in 107 108 addition to the powers conferred by any other law, general, special or local. This section shall be construed as an 109 110 additional and alternative method of funding all or any portion of the purchasing, building, improving, owning or operating of 111 112 roadways, highways or bridges under the jurisdiction of the 113 Mississippi Transportation Commission, county boards of 114 supervisors or municipal governing authorities, any provision of the laws of the state or any charter of any municipality to the 115 116 contrary notwithstanding.

SECTION 3. (1) For the purpose of providing funds to defray the expenses of projects authorized pursuant to Sections 1 and 2 of this act, the board of supervisors of a county or the governing authorities of a municipality shall have the right to borrow money for the project, and to issue revenue bonds therefor in such principal amounts as the board of supervisors or governing authorities may determine to be necessary to provide sufficient funds to defray the expenses of projects authorized pursuant to Sections 1 and 2 of this act. The bonds shall be payable out of any revenues derived from the project, including grants or contributions from the federal government or other sources. Such bonds may be sold at public or private sale at not less than par and shall bear interest at a rate or rates not exceeding that allowed in Section 75-17-103. Any such bonds so issued shall not constitute a debt of the county, the municipality or any political

subdivision of the county or the city within the meaning of any

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constitutional, statutory or charter restriction, limitation or 133 134 provision. It shall be plainly stated on the face of each bond in 135 substance that the bond has been issued pursuant to the authority 136 granted in this section and that the taxing power of the county or 137 municipality issuing the bond is not pledged to the payment of the 138 bond or the interest on it and that the bond and the interest on 139 it are payable solely from the revenues of the project for which the bond is issued. 140

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- (2) All bonds issued under the authority of this section shall bear such date or dates, shall be in such form or denomination, shall bear such rate of interest, and shall mature at such times as the county or municipality shall determine, but no bonds issued under the authority of this section shall mature more than thirty (30) years from the date of the issuance thereof and none of the bonds shall be sold for less than par and accrued interest. All bonds shall be sold in the manner now provided by law for the sale of bonds without any restrictions, limitations, requirements or conditions applicable to the borrowing of such money and the issuance of such bonds which are not herein contained. The denomination, form, place of payment and other details of such bonds may be determined by resolution or order of the board of supervisors of a county or the governing authorities of a municipality, and shall be executed on behalf of the county or municipality as is now provided by law.
- 157 Before issuing any bonds under the provisions of this section, the board of supervisors of the county or the governing 158 159 authorities of the municipality shall, by resolution spread upon the minutes, declare its intention to issue such bonds for the 160 purposes authorized by this section and shall state in the 161 162 resolution the amount of bonds proposed to be issued and shall 163 likewise fix in the resolution the date upon which the board of 164 supervisors of the county or the governing authorities of the municipality proposes to direct the issuance of the bonds. Notice

of such intention shall be published once a week for at least 166 167 three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper published or having a 168 general circulation in the county or the municipality, with the 169 first publication of the notice to be made not less than 170 twenty-one (21) days prior to the date fixed in the resolution for 171 the issuance of the bonds and the last publication to be made not more than seven (7) days prior to such date. If, on or before the 172 date specified in the resolution, twenty percent (20%) or fifteen 173 hundred (1500), whichever is less, of the qualified electors of 174 the county or municipality shall file a written protest against 175 176 the issuance of the bonds, then an election upon the issuance of the bonds shall be called, and held, as provided in this section. 177 178 If no such protest shall be filed, then the board of supervisors of the county or the governing authorities of the municipality may 179 issue such bonds without an election on the question of the 180 181 issuance of the bonds at any time within a period of two (2) years 182 after the date specified in the resolution.

- 183 If an election is called under the provisions of this section on the question of the issuance of bonds, the election 184 185 shall be held, insofar as practicable, in the same manner as other elections are held in the county or municipality. At the 186 187 election, all qualified electors of the county or municipality may 188 vote and the ballots used in the election shall have printed thereon a brief statement of the amount and purposes of the 189 190 proposed bond issue and the words "FOR THE BOND ISSUE" and the words "AGAINST THE BOND ISSUE," and the voters shall vote by 191 192 placing a cross (X) or check mark $(\sqrt{})$ opposite their choice on the 193 proposition.
- 194 (5) When the results of any election provided for in this
 195 section shall have been canvassed by the election commissioners of
 196 the county or municipality and certified by them to the proper
 197 authorities, it shall be the duty of the board of supervisors of
 198 the county or the governing authorities of the municipality to
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199 determine and adjudicate whether or not a majority of the 200 qualified electors who voted in the election voted in favor of the 201 issuance of the bonds and unless a majority of the qualified 202 electors who voted in the election voted in favor of the issuance 203 of the bonds, then the bonds shall not be issued. 204 majority of the qualified electors who vote in the election vote 205 in favor of the bonds, the board of supervisors of the county or the governing authorities of the municipality may issue the bonds, 206 207 either in whole or in part, within two (2) years from the date of such election, or within two (2) years after final favorable 208 209 determination of any litigation affecting the issuance of such bonds at such time or times, and in such amount or amounts, not 210 211 exceeding that specified in the notice of the election, as shall 212 be deemed proper.

213 (6) This section, without reference to any other statute, shall be deemed to be full and complete authority for the issuance 214 215 of bonds and borrowing of money as authorized in this section by 216 counties or municipalities, and shall be construed as an additional and alternate method therefor. The bonds authorized by 217 218 this section shall not constitute an indebtedness within the 219 meaning of any constitutional or statutory limitation or 220 restriction.

221 SECTION 4. (1) (a) A special fund, to be designated as the "Toll Road Revenue Bond Fund," is created within the State 222 223 Treasury. The fund shall be maintained by the State Treasurer as a separate and special fund, separate and apart from the General 224 225 Fund of the state. Unexpended amounts remaining in the fund at 226 the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any interest earned or investment earnings on amounts in 227 228 the fund shall be deposited into such fund.

(b) Monies deposited into the fund shall be disbursed, 230 in the discretion of the Mississippi Transportation Commission, to

- pay the costs incurred in defraying the expenses of projects authorized pursuant to Sections 1 and 2 of this act.
- 233 (2) Amounts deposited into such special fund shall be
- 234 disbursed to pay the expenses described in subsection (1) of this
- 235 section. If any monies in the special fund are not used within
- 236 six (6) years after the date the proceeds of the bonds authorized
- 237 under Sections 4 through 19 of this act are deposited into such
- 238 fund, then the Mississippi Transportation Commission shall provide
- 239 an accounting of such unused monies to the State Bond Commission.
- 240 Promptly after the State Bond Commission has certified, by
- 241 resolution duly adopted, that the projects for which the revenue
- 242 bonds have been issued shall have been completed, abandoned or
- 243 cannot be completed in a timely fashion, any amounts remaining in
- 244 such special fund shall be applied to pay debt service on the
- 245 bonds issued under Sections 4 through 19 of this act, in
- 246 accordance with the proceedings authorizing the issuance of such
- 247 bonds and as directed by the commission.
- 248 **SECTION 5.** For the purpose of providing for the payment of
- 249 the principal of and interest upon bonds issued under the
- 250 provisions of Sections 4 through 19 of this act, there is created
- 251 a special bond sinking fund in the State Treasury. The special
- 252 bond sinking fund shall consist of the monies required to be
- 253 deposited into the fund under Section 2 of this act and such other
- 254 amounts as the Legislature may direct to be paid into the fund by
- 255 appropriation or other authorization by the Legislature.
- 256 Unexpended amounts remaining in the special bond sinking fund at
- 257 the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General
- 258 Fund, and any interest earned or investment earnings on amounts in
- 259 the special bond sinking fund shall be deposited into such sinking
- 260 fund.
- 261 **SECTION 6.** (1) The State Bond Commission, at one time or
- 262 from time to time, may declare by resolution the necessity for
- 263 issuance of revenue bonds of the State of Mississippi for the

purpose of providing funds to defray the expenses of projects 264 265 authorized pursuant to Sections 1 and 2 of this act. Upon the 266 adoption of a resolution by the Mississippi Transportation 267 Commission, declaring the necessity for the issuance of the 268 revenue bonds authorized by this section, the Mississippi 269 Transportation Commission shall deliver a certified copy of its 270 resolution or resolutions to the State Bond Commission. receipt of such resolution, the State Bond Commission, in its 271 discretion, may act as the issuing agent, prescribe the form of 272 the bonds, advertise for and accept bids, issue and sell, at 273 274 public or private sale, the bonds so authorized to be sold and do any and all other things necessary and advisable in connection 275 276 with the issuance and sale of such bonds. Revenue bonds issued 277 under this section shall be in such principal amounts as the Mississippi Transportation Commission may determine to be 278 necessary to provide sufficient funds to defray the expenses of 279 projects authorized pursuant to Sections 1 and 2 of this act. 280 281 Any investment earnings on amounts deposited into the special fund created in Section 4 of this act shall be used to pay 282 283 debt service on bonds issued under Sections 4 through 19 of this 284 act, in accordance with the proceedings authorizing issuance of 285 such bonds. 286 SECTION 7. The principal of and interest on the bonds authorized under Sections 4 through 19 of this act shall be 287 288 payable in the manner provided in this section. Such bonds shall 289 bear such date or dates, be in such denomination or denominations,

290 bear interest at such rate or rates (not to exceed the limits set 291 forth in Section 75-17-103, Mississippi Code of 1972), be payable at such place or places within or without the State of 292 293 Mississippi, shall mature absolutely at such time or times not to 294 exceed thirty (30) years from date of issue, be redeemable before 295 maturity at such time or times and upon such terms, with or without premium, shall bear such registration privileges, and *HR40/R461* 408 H. B. No. 06/HR40/R461 PAGE 9 (JWB\BD)

297 shall be substantially in such form, all as shall be determined by 298 resolution of the State Bond Commission.

SECTION 8. The bonds authorized by Sections 4 through 19 of 299 300 this act shall be signed by the Chairman of the State Bond 301 Commission, or by his facsimile signature, and the official seal 302 of the State Bond Commission shall be affixed thereto, attested by 303 the secretary of the commission. The interest coupons, if any, to 304 be attached to such bonds may be executed by the facsimile 305 signatures of such officers. Whenever any such bonds shall have been signed by the officials designated to sign the bonds who were 306 307 in office at the time of such signing but who may have ceased to 308 be such officers before the sale and delivery of such bonds, or 309 who may not have been in office on the date such bonds may bear, the signatures of such officers upon such bonds and coupons shall 310 nevertheless be valid and sufficient for all purposes and have the 311 312 same effect as if the person so officially signing such bonds had 313 remained in office until their delivery to the purchaser, or had 314 been in office on the date such bonds may bear. notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, such bonds may be 315 316 issued as provided in the Registered Bond Act of the State of 317 Mississippi.

SECTION 9. All bonds and interest coupons issued under the provisions of Sections 4 through 19 of this act have all the qualities and incidents of negotiable instruments under the provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code, and in exercising the powers granted by Sections 4 through 19 of this act, the State Bond Commission shall not be required to and need not comply with the provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code.

325 <u>SECTION 10.</u> The State Bond Commission shall act as the
326 issuing agent for the bonds authorized under Sections 4 through 19
327 of this act, prescribe the form of the bonds, advertise for and
328 accept bids, issue and sell, at public or private sale, the bonds
329 so authorized to be sold, pay all fees and costs incurred in such
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330 issuance and sale, and do any and all other things necessary and 331 advisable in connection with the issuance and sale of such bonds. 332 The State Bond Commission is authorized and empowered to pay the 333 costs that are incident to the sale, issuance and delivery of the 334 bonds authorized under Sections 4 through 19 of this act from the 335 proceeds derived from the sale of such bonds. The State Bond Commission shall sell such bonds on sealed bids at public or 336 337 private sale, and for such price as it may determine to be for the best interest of the State of Mississippi, but no such sale shall 338 339 be made at a price less than par plus accrued interest to the date 340 of delivery of the bonds to the purchaser. All interest accruing on such bonds so issued shall be payable semiannually or annually; 341 342 however, the first interest payment may be for any period of not 343 more than one (1) year. Notice of the sale of any such bonds shall be published at 344 least one time, not less than ten (10) days before the date of 345 346 sale, and shall be so published in one or more newspapers 347 published or having a general circulation in the City of Jackson, Mississippi, and in one or more other newspapers or financial 348 349 journals with a national circulation, to be selected by the State 350 Bond Commission. 351 The State Bond Commission, when issuing any bonds under the 352 authority of Sections 4 through 19 of this act, may provide that 353 bonds, at the option of the State of Mississippi, may be called in 354 for payment and redemption at the call price named therein and accrued interest on such date or dates named therein. 355 356 SECTION 11. Bonds issued under authority of Sections 4 357 through 19 of this act shall be revenue bonds of the state, the principal of and interest on which shall be payable solely from 358 359 the revenue from projects authorized under Section 1 or 2 of this 360 The bonds shall never constitute an indebtedness of the 361 state within the meaning of any state constitutional provision or statutory limitation, and shall never constitute or give rise to a

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pecuniary liability of the state, or a charge against its general 363 364 credit or taxing powers, and such fact shall be plainly stated on 365 the face of each such bond. The bonds shall not be considered 366 when computing any limitation of indebtedness of the state. 367 bonds issued under the authority of Sections 4 through 19 of this 368 act and all interest coupons applicable thereto shall be construed to be negotiable instruments, despite the fact that they are 369 370 payable solely from a specified source.

SECTION 12. Upon the issuance and sale of bonds under the 371 provisions of Sections 4 through 19 of this act, the State Bond 372 373 Commission shall transfer the proceeds of any such sale or sales 374 to a special fund created in Section 4 of this act. The proceeds 375 of such bonds shall be disbursed solely upon the order of the 376 Mississippi Transportation Commission under such restrictions, if 377 any, as may be contained in the resolution providing for the 378 issuance of the bonds.

SECTION 13. The bonds authorized under Sections 4 through 19 of this act may be issued without any other proceedings or the happening of any other conditions or things other than those proceedings, conditions and things which are specified or required by Sections 4 through 19 of this act. Any resolution providing for the issuance of bonds under the provisions of Sections 4 through 19 of this act shall become effective immediately upon its adoption by the commission, and any such resolution may be adopted at any regular or special meeting of the commission by a majority of its members.

SECTION 14. The bonds authorized under the authority of

Sections 4 through 19 of this act may be validated in the Chancery

Court of the First Judicial District of Hinds County, Mississippi,

in the manner and with the force and effect provided by Chapter

13, Title 31, Mississippi Code of 1972, for the validation of

county, municipal, school district and other bonds. The notice to

taxpayers required by such statutes shall be published in a

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newspaper published or having a general circulation in the City of Jackson, Mississippi.

SECTION 15. Any holder of bonds issued under the provisions 398 399 of Sections 4 through 19 of this act or of any of the interest 400 coupons pertaining thereto may, either at law or in equity, by 401 suit, action, mandamus or other proceeding, protect and enforce 402 any and all rights granted under Sections 4 through 19 of this 403 act, or under such resolution, and may enforce and compel 404 performance of all duties required by Sections 4 through 19 of this act to be performed, in order to provide for the payment of 405 406 bonds and interest thereon.

407 SECTION 16. All bonds issued under the provisions of 408 Sections 4 through 19 of this act shall be legal investments for 409 trustees and other fiduciaries, and for savings banks, trust 410 companies and insurance companies organized under the laws of the 411 State of Mississippi, and such bonds shall be legal securities 412 which may be deposited with and shall be received by all public 413 officers and bodies of this state and all municipalities and political subdivisions for the purpose of securing the deposit of 414 415 public funds.

416 <u>SECTION 17.</u> Bonds issued under the provisions of Sections 4
417 through 19 of this act and income therefrom shall be exempt from
418 all taxation in the State of Mississippi.

419 <u>SECTION 18.</u> The proceeds of the bonds issued under Sections
420 4 through 19 of this act shall be used solely for the purposes
421 provided in Sections 4 through 19 of this act, including the costs
422 incident to the issuance and sale of such bonds.

SECTION 19. The State Treasurer is authorized, without
further process of law, to certify to the Department of Finance
and Administration the necessity for warrants, and the Department
of Finance and Administration is authorized and directed to issue
such warrants, in such amounts as may be necessary to pay when due
the principal of, premium, if any, and interest on, or the

- 429 accreted value of, all bonds issued under Sections 4 through 19 of
- 430 this act; and the State Treasurer shall forward the necessary
- 431 amount to the designated place or places of payment of such bonds
- 432 in ample time to discharge such bonds, or the interest thereon, on
- 433 the due dates thereof.
- 434 SECTION 20. Section 65-3-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
- 435 amended as follows:
- 436 65-3-1. Subject only to the provisions hereinafter
- 437 contained, it shall be unlawful for any person, acting privately
- 438 or in any official capacity or as an employee of any subdivision
- 439 of the state, to charge or collect any toll or other charge from
- 440 any person for the privilege of traveling on any part of any
- 441 highway which has been heretofore or may hereafter be designated
- 442 as a state highway, and being a part of the state highway system,
- 443 or on or across any bridge wholly within this state, which is a
- 444 part of any such highway.
- For a violation of this section, any judge or chancellor may,
- 446 in termtime or vacation, grant an injunction upon complaint of the
- 447 <u>Mississippi Transportation Commission</u>.
- However, none of the provisions of this section shall
- 449 prohibit the collection of any toll or other charge for the
- 450 privilege of traveling on, or the use of, any causeway, bridge,
- 451 tunnel, toll bridge, or any combination of such facility
- 452 constructed under the provisions of Sections 65-23-101 through
- 453 65-23-119, forming a part of U.S. Highway * * * 90 across the Bay
- 454 of St. Louis, or across or under the East Pascagoula River or the
- 455 West Pascagoula River on * * * U.S. Highway 90.
- The provisions of this section shall be inapplicable to any
- 457 toll road or bridge built or operated under the authority of
- 458 Section 1 or Section 2 of House Bill No. , 2006 Regular
- 459 Session.
- 460 **SECTION 21.** The Attorney General of the State of Mississippi
- 461 shall submit this act, immediately upon approval by the Governor,

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462	or upon approval by the Legislature subsequent to a veto, to the
463	Attorney General of the United States or to the United States
464	District Court for the District of Columbia in accordance with the
465	provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended and
466	extended.
467	SECTION 22. This act shall take effect and be in force from
468	and after the date it is effectuated under Section 5 of the Voting

Rights Act of 1965, as amended and extended.