

By: Senator(s) Cuevas

To: Local and Private;
Finance

SENATE BILL NO. 3231

1 AN ACT TO AMEND CHAPTER 1019, LOCAL AND PRIVATE LAWS OF 1996,
2 AS LAST AMENDED BY CHAPTER 916, LOCAL AND PRIVATE LAWS OF 2003, TO
3 EXTEND THE REPEAL DATE ON THE PROVISIONS OF LAW THAT CREATE THE
4 HANCOCK COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BUREAU AND PRESCRIBE ITS POWERS
5 AND DUTIES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 1019, Local and Private Laws of 1996, as
8 amended by Chapter 980, Local and Private Laws of 1998, as amended
9 by Chapter 956, Local and Private Laws of 2000, as amended by
10 Chapter 977, Local and Private Laws of 2001, as amended by Chapter
11 916, Local and Private Laws of 2003, is amended as follows:

12 Section 1. The following terms as used in this act shall
13 have meanings ascribed in this section unless the context
14 otherwise clearly requires:

15 (a) "Board of supervisors" or "board" means the Board
16 of Supervisors of Hancock County, Mississippi.

17 (b) "Bureau" means the Hancock County Tourism
18 Development Bureau.

19 (c) "Casino" means any casino properly licensed by the
20 Mississippi Gaming Commission and operating in Hancock County,
21 Mississippi.

22 (d) "Complimentary sales" or "complimentaries" means
23 activities involving the furnishing or providing of rooms for
24 lodging or sleeping, or the furnishing or providing of food or
25 beverage for the public's consumption, or the furnishing or
26 providing of other services, which any casino performs without
27 cost to the recipient at the point of sale.

28 (e) "County" means Hancock County, Mississippi.

29 (f) "Hotel" or "motel" means any establishment engaged
30 in the business of furnishing or providing rooms intended or
31 designed for lodging or sleeping purposes for transient guests and
32 does not encompass any hospital, convalescent or nursing homes or
33 sanitarium or any hotel-like facility operated by or in connection
34 with a hospital or medical clinic providing rooms exclusively for
35 patients and their families.

36 (g) "Similar establishment" means any bed and breakfast
37 or condominium or time-share establishment that provides rooms
38 intended or designed for lodging or sleeping purposes for
39 transient guests.

40 (h) "Tourism-related business" means any business,
41 firm, or company engaged in the activity of operating a
42 restaurant, hotel or motel, casino, or similar business that
43 provides goods, service or entertainment for the enjoyment of
44 persons not residing in Hancock County.

45 Section 2. (1) For the purposes of providing funds to
46 promote and develop tourism and tourism-related activities in
47 Hancock County, Mississippi, there is levied and assessed against
48 and shall be collected from every person, firm, corporation,
49 operating hotels or motels, or a similar establishment, renting
50 rooms to transient guests for ninety (90) days or less in Hancock
51 County an assessment, in addition to all other taxes not imposed,
52 which shall be in an amount not to exceed two percent (2%) of the
53 gross proceeds of sales derived from room rentals by hotels,
54 motels and similar establishments in Hancock County. The
55 assessment shall not be levied upon or collected from gross
56 proceeds of nontaxable rooms, complimentary sales or
57 complimentaries.

58 (2) (a) Before imposing the taxes authorized in subsection
59 (1) of this section the board of supervisors shall, by resolution
60 spread upon its minutes, declare its intention to impose the taxes
61 authorized by this act and shall state in such resolution the

62 amount of the tax to be imposed, and shall fix in such resolution
63 the date upon which the board proposes to enact its resolution
64 directing the levy and assessment of such tax. Such resolution
65 shall be published once a week for at least three (3) weeks in a
66 newspaper published or having a general circulation in the county,
67 with the first publication to be made not less than fourteen (14)
68 days before the date fixed in the resolution under which the board
69 proposes to levy and assess such tax, and the last publication
70 shall be made not more than seven (7) days before such date. If,
71 on or before the date specified in the resolution, twenty percent
72 (20%) or fifteen hundred (1500), whichever is less, of the
73 qualified electors of the county file a written protest against
74 the imposition of such tax, then an election upon the levy and
75 assessment of such tax shall be called and held as herein
76 provided. If no such protest is filed, then the board may enact
77 its resolution directing the levy and assessment of the tax at any
78 time within a period of six (6) months after the date specified in
79 the resolution. If an election is required by the protest of the
80 required number of qualified electors of the county, then an
81 election shall be held by the county under applicable laws for
82 conducting elections of such assessment issues, with such election
83 to be conducted at the next special election day as such is
84 defined by Section 23-15-833, Mississippi Code of 1972, occurring
85 more than sixty (60) days after the date specified in the
86 resolution.

87 (b) When the results of the election on the question of
88 the levy of the tax have been canvassed by the election
89 commissioners of the county and certified by them to the board of
90 supervisors, it shall be the duty of the board of supervisors to
91 determine and adjudicate whether or not a majority of the
92 qualified electors who voted thereon in the election voted in
93 favor of the levy of the tax, and unless a majority of the
94 qualified electors who voted thereon in the election voted in

95 favor of the levy of the tax, then the tax shall not be levied.
96 If a majority of the qualified electors who vote thereon in the
97 election vote in favor of the levy of the tax, then the board of
98 supervisors may levy the tax, in whole or in part, within six (6)
99 months after the date of the election or the date of the final
100 favorable termination of any litigation affecting the levy of the
101 tax.

102 (3) (a) Persons liable for the tax imposed herein shall add
103 the amount of tax to the sales price or gross proceeds of sales
104 and shall collect, insofar as practicable, the amount of the tax
105 due by him from the person receiving the services at the time of
106 payment therefor.

107 (b) The tax shall be collected by and paid to the State
108 Tax Commission on a form prescribed by the State Tax Commission,
109 in the same manner that state sales taxes are computed, collected
110 and paid; and the full enforcement provisions and all other
111 provisions of Chapter 65, Title 27, Mississippi Code of 1972,
112 shall apply as necessary to the implementation and administration
113 of this act.

114 (c) The proceeds of the tax, less three percent (3%) to
115 be retained by the State Tax Commission to defray the cost of
116 collection, shall be paid to the board of supervisors of the
117 county on or before the fifteenth day of the month following the
118 month in which collected by the State Tax Commission.

119 (d) The proceeds of the tax shall not be considered by
120 the county as general fund revenues and shall be dedicated to and
121 used by the bureau solely for the promotion of tourism and
122 tourism-related activities in the county.

123 Section 3. (1) The funds derived from the proceeds of the
124 tax authorized in Section 2 of this act shall be expended by the
125 Hancock County Tourism Bureau, created by this act and to be
126 composed of nine (9) members, appointed as provided in this
127 section. The board of supervisors shall appoint four (4) members

128 to the bureau. The Mayor and the City Council of the City of Bay
129 St. Louis, respectively, each shall appoint one (1) member to the
130 bureau. The Mayor and the Board of Aldermen of the City of
131 Waveland, respectively, each shall appoint one (1) member to the
132 bureau. The Hancock County Chamber of Commerce shall appoint one
133 (1) member to the bureau. Each person appointed as a member to
134 the bureau may be engaged in or employed by tourism-related
135 businesses in Hancock County.

136 (2) The members of the bureau shall be appointed within
137 sixty (60) days after the effective date of this act in the
138 following manner: Two (2) members shall be appointed to serve for
139 terms of one (1) year, four (4) members shall be appointed to
140 serve for terms of two (2) years, and three (3) members shall be
141 appointed to serve for terms of three (3) years. The board of
142 supervisors, the governing authorities of the Cities of Bay St.
143 Louis and Waveland, and the Hancock County Chamber of Commerce
144 shall draw lots to determine which of the nine (9) members of the
145 bureau shall be appointed for the initial terms of office. After
146 the expiration of the initial terms, all subsequent appointments
147 shall be made for terms of three (3) years from the expiration
148 date of the previous term, except that any appointment to fill a
149 vacancy shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term only.
150 Before entering on the duties of the office each member of the
151 bureau shall enter into and give bond to be approved by the
152 Secretary of State of the State of Mississippi in the sum of
153 Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) conditioned on the
154 satisfactory performance of his duties. This bond premium shall
155 be paid from the bureau's fund. Such bond shall be payable to
156 Hancock County and in the event of a breach thereof, suit may be
157 brought by the county for the benefit of the bureau.

158 (3) The bureau shall adopt a set of bylaws which may include
159 provisions that it deems appropriate but shall include provisions
160 for the following:

161 (a) Procedures and times for its meetings following
162 Roberts Rules of Order and complying with the Open Meetings Law of
163 Mississippi, Section 25-41-1 et seq., Mississippi Code of 1972.

164 (b) The secretary-treasurer making a monthly report to
165 the board of supervisors and the governing authorities of the
166 Cities of Bay St. Louis and Waveland as to the current operational
167 and financial status of the bureau and providing a written copy of
168 such report.

169 (c) The bureau annually causing a complete review of
170 all the books and accounts of the bureau to be made by an
171 independent, certified public accountant and shall provide a copy
172 to the board of supervisors and the governing authorities of the
173 Cities of Bay St. Louis and Waveland.

174 (d) The bureau shall annually submit a copy of the
175 proposed budget to the board of supervisors and the governing
176 authorities of the Cities of Bay St. Louis and Waveland.

177 (4) (a) Within thirty (30) days after the initial
178 appointments of the bureau have been made, the bureau shall meet
179 and from their number choose a president, vice president and
180 secretary-treasurer. These officers will serve for one-year terms
181 and an election will be held annually to select officers.

182 (b) The bureau shall require the necessary and
183 appropriate bond for persons authorized or responsible for the
184 funds of the bureau. Any action taken by the bureau shall be
185 official and may take place at regular, special, or adjourned
186 meetings.

187 (c) The officers of the bureau may be reimbursed for
188 actual expenses including mileage and travel expenses, whether
189 within or without the State of Mississippi, incurred in the
190 performance of their duties as authorized by Section 25-3-41,
191 Mississippi Code of 1972.

192 (d) The officers of the bureau may employ any personnel
193 and take any other acts they deem necessary to carry out in the

194 mission of the bureau. The officers of the bureau shall set the
195 level of compensation to be paid to the bureau's employees.

196 (e) The bureau shall at least annually develop a plan
197 to attract visitors to and promote tourism in Hancock County.

198 Section 4. (1) The bureau shall have the authority to take
199 any action necessary to effectuate the purposes and intent of this
200 act.

201 (2) The bureau shall have the authority to (a) apply for and
202 accept grants and loans on behalf of the board of supervisors, the
203 governing authorities of the City of Bay St. Louis and the
204 governing authorities of the City of Waveland, as appropriate,
205 from the State of Mississippi or the United States of America or
206 any agency thereof; and (b) contract with any agency of the State
207 of Mississippi or the United States of America for the development
208 and promotion of tourism in Hancock County.

209 Section 5. This act shall stand repealed on July 1, 2010.

210 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
211 and after July 1, 2007.