To: Rules; Appropriations

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2009

By: Senator(s) Baria, Dawkins

To: Rules; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 3176

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE; TO DIRECT THE COMMISSION TO STUDY ISSUES RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE EMERGING CARBON MARKET; TO ESTABLISH A CLIMATE CHANGE POLLUTANT REDUCTION GOAL AND COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The Governor's Commission on Climate Change is hereby created and established, referred to hereafter as the "commission."

(2) The commission shall be composed of twenty-one (21) members appointed as follows:

(a) Two (2) members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;

(b) Two (2) members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

(c) Seventeen (17) members appointed by the Governor as follows:

(i) One (1) member from the public energy sector;

(ii) One (1) member from a rural electric cooperative;

(iii) One (1) member from the municipal energy sector;

(iv) Two (2) members from the agriculture sector;

(v) One (1) member from the forestry sector;

(vi) Two (2) members from separate nonprofit environmental organizations;

(vii) Three (3) members who are scientists from an accredited university;
2. One (1) of the three (3) scientists shall be a climatologist;

(viii) One (1) member from the Mississippi Economic Council;

(ix) One (1) member of the AFL-CIO;

(x) One (1) member who is an economist from a Mississippi state institution of higher learning;

(xi) One (1) member from the construction industry with experience in sustainable energy construction or design; and

(xii) Two (2) members who are citizens at large.

(3) The commission shall establish and appoint an advisory body composed of the directors of the following state agencies, or his or her designee:

(a) Mississippi Department of Agriculture;

(b) Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality;

(c) Mississippi Forestry Commission;

(d) Mississippi Department of Transportation;

(e) Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks;

(f) Mississippi Public Service Commission;

(g) Mississippi State Board of Health;

(h) Mississippi Development Authority; and

(i) Mississippi Oil and Gas Board.

SECTION 2. (1) The commission shall have two (2) co-chairs to be elected from among the members of the commission.

(2) A quorum of the commission shall consist of a majority of the members.

(3) A vacancy on the commission shall be filled as soon as possible by the appointing authority.

SECTION 3. (1) The commission shall conduct an in-depth examination and evaluation of the issues related to climate change and the potential impacts of climate change on the state, its citizens, its natural resources, and its economy, including
without limitation, agriculture, travel and tourism, recreation, insurance and economic growth and development.

(2) Based on the commission's evaluation of the current climate change data, the assessment of climate change mitigation strategies, and the available climate change pollutant reduction strategies, the commission shall set forth:

(a) A climate change pollutant reduction goal; and
(b) A comprehensive strategic plan for implementation of the climate change pollutant reduction goal.

(3) The commission shall present its climate change pollutant reduction goal and comprehensive strategic plan for consideration to the Legislature.

(4) The purpose of the climate change pollutant reduction goal and comprehensive strategic plan is to place Mississippi in a position to help stabilize the global climate, to allow Mississippi to lead the nation in attracting clean and renewable energy industries to our state, and to reduce consumer energy dependence on current carbon-generating technologies and expenditures.

(5) In fulfilling its purpose under this act, the commission shall:

(a) Review current scientific literature on the causes of climate change;
(b) Review actions taken by the federal government and by other states to address climate change;
(c) Evaluate the available data regarding emissions of greenhouse gases from within the state and evaluate the extent to which reductions in the emissions of greenhouse gases in the state may affect climate change;
(d) Evaluate the economic opportunities for the state from the emerging carbon market that may result from international, national and local efforts to address the effect of climate change;
(e) Conduct a cost-effectiveness analysis based on the projected expenses of taking immediate action versus delayed action to address the effect of climate change on individuals, households, local and state governments, businesses, educational institutions, medical institutions, agricultural operations, and other sectors identified by the commission;

(f) Evaluate the benefit of any action taken at the state level, either by or within this state or by other states, at the national level, or at the international level to address the effect of climate change on individuals, households, local and state governments, businesses, educational institutions, agricultural operations, medical institutions, and other sectors identified by the commission; and

(g) The Governor's Commission on Climate Change is authorized to accept gifts, grants and donations for use in carrying out its purpose and duties.

SECTION 4. The commission may work cooperatively with other states and federal governmental agencies to organize a Governor's forum on climate change, including its causes, impacts, challenges and opportunities in the region.

SECTION 5. The Commissioner of Agriculture shall assign staff to the commission to aid in its work.

SECTION 6. The Governor shall convene the first meeting of the commission, which shall be at the New Capitol. Further meetings shall be at the call of the co-chairs.

SECTION 7. The commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor on or before November 1, 2009, in order to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature.

SECTION 8. The commission shall be abolished on or before December 31, 2009, at the discretion of the Governor.

SECTION 9. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2009.