

By: Representative Stamps

To: Agriculture

HOUSE BILL NO. 784

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH "THE FARMER EQUITY ACT OF 2021"; TO
2 PRESCRIBE THE LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS; TO DEFINE TERMINOLOGY; TO
3 REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE TO
4 ENSURE THE INCLUSION OF SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS IN THE
5 DEVELOPMENT, ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF FOOD AND
6 AGRICULTURE LAWS REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS; TO PRESCRIBE
7 THE DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE RELATING
8 TO THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACT; TO REQUIRE
9 THE DEPARTMENT TO SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE
10 ON ITS RECOMMENDATIONS AND EFFORTS TO SERVE SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED
11 FARMERS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

13 **SECTION 1.** This shall be known, and may be cited as "The
14 Farmer Equity Act of 2021."

15 **SECTION 2.** The State of Mississippi recognizes the
16 importance of investing in the long-term prosperity of our food
17 and farming system, beginning with farmers. It is the intent of
18 the Legislature that the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce
19 should support socially disadvantaged farmers and include this
20 support in the department's vision and its relevant policies.



21 **SECTION 3.** As used in this act, the following terms shall
22 have the meanings ascribed in this section, unless context clearly
23 requires otherwise:

24 (a) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of
25 Agriculture and Commerce.

26 (b) "Department" means the Mississippi Department of
27 Agriculture and Commerce.

28 (c) "Socially disadvantaged farmers" means a farmer who
29 is a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

30 (d) "Socially disadvantaged group" means a group whose
31 members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice
32 because of their identity as members of a group without regard
33 to that member's personal qualities. The term "socially
34 disadvantaged group" includes, but is not limited to:

35 (i) African Americans;

36 (ii) Native Indians;

37 (iii) Alaskan Natives;

38 (iv) Hispanics;

39 (v) Asian Americans; and

40 (vi) Pacific Islanders.

41 (e) "Urbanized area" means a geographic location with a
42 population of at least fifty thousand (50,000) people.

43 **SECTION 4.** (1) The Mississippi Department of Agriculture
44 and Commerce shall ensure the inclusion of socially disadvantaged
45 farmers, including socially disadvantaged farmers in urbanized



46 areas, in the development, adoption, implementation and
47 enforcement of food and agriculture laws regulations, policies and
48 programs.

49 (2) The department shall:

50 (a) Consult with the Executive Director of the
51 Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, the Executive
52 Director of the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation
53 Commission, the Field Office Director of the Mississippi Division
54 of Housing and Urban Development, the Executive Director of the
55 Department of Human Services and other interested parties of the
56 public and private sector of the state on opportunities for
57 socially disadvantaged farmers to coordinate state programs;

58 (b) Disseminate information regarding opportunities
59 provided by, including, but not limited to, the United States
60 Department of Agriculture, the United States Environmental
61 Protection Agency, the United States General Accounting Office,
62 the United States Office of Management and Budget, and other
63 federal agencies that have programs that may assist socially
64 disadvantaged farmers; and

65 (c) Evaluate opportunities for the inclusion of
66 socially disadvantaged farmers on boards, committees, commissions
67 and other similar positions created by the department.

68 **SECTION 5.** On or before January 1, 2022, the department
69 shall submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature on
70 efforts to serve socially disadvantaged farmers and female farmers



71 in this state. The report shall include recommendations to the
72 Governor and the Legislature on how to improve processes to
73 include socially disadvantaged farmers. The report to the
74 Legislature shall be filed electronically with the Secretary of
75 the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives, and
76 shall be provided electronically to any member of the Legislature
77 upon request.

78 **SECTION 6.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
79 and after its passage.

