

By: Representative Zuber

To: Insurance

HOUSE BILL NO. 974  
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 61-3-15, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 AUTHORIZE CERTAIN REGIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITIES TO PROVIDE  
3 DEPENDENT HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE AS AN EMPLOYMENT BENEFIT; AND  
4 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 61-3-15, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
7 amended as follows:

8 61-3-15. An authority shall have all the powers necessary or  
9 convenient to carry out the purposes of this chapter (excluding  
10 the power to levy and collect taxes or special assessments)  
11 including, but not limited to, the power:

12 (a) To sue and be sued, to have a seal and to have  
13 perpetual succession.

14 (b) To purchase general liability insurance coverage,  
15 including errors and omissions insurance, for its officials and  
16 employees.

17 (c) To employ an executive director, secretary,  
18 technical experts, and such other officers, agents and employees,  
19 permanent and temporary, as it may require, and to determine their



20 qualifications and duties, and to establish compensation and other  
21 employment benefits as may be advisable to attract and retain  
22 proficient personnel. For regional airport authorities organized  
23 under Section 61-3-7, such employment benefits may include payment  
24 for all or part of dependent health insurance coverage.

25 (d) To execute such contracts and other instruments and  
26 take such other action as may be necessary or convenient to carry  
27 out the purposes of this chapter.

28 (e) To plan, establish, develop, construct, enlarge,  
29 improve, maintain, equip, operate, regulate and protect airports  
30 and air navigation facilities within this state and within any  
31 adjoining state, including the acquisition, lease, lease-purchase,  
32 construction, installation, equipment, maintenance and operation  
33 of such airports or buildings, equipment and other facilities or  
34 other property for the servicing of aircraft or for the comfort  
35 and accommodation of air travelers or for any other purpose deemed  
36 by the authority to be necessary to carry out its duties; to  
37 develop, operate, manage or own and maintain intermodal facilities  
38 to serve air and surface cargo and multimodal facilities to serve  
39 highway and rail passenger transportation needs to ensure  
40 interface and interaction between modes for cargo and passengers;  
41 to construct, improve, and maintain means of ingress and egress to  
42 airport properties from and over off-airport sites with approval  
43 of the city or county in which the off-airport site is located; to  
44 market, promote and advertise airport properties, goods and



45 services; and to directly purchase and sell supplies, goods and  
46 commodities incident to the operation of its airport properties  
47 without having to make purchases thereof through the municipal  
48 governing authorities, and with the authority to utilize  
49 design-build and construction manager at-risk methods of  
50 construction in accordance with Sections 31-7-13.1 and 31-7-13.2.  
51 For all the previously stated purposes, an authority may, by  
52 purchase, gift, devise, lease, eminent domain proceedings or  
53 otherwise, acquire property, real or personal, or any interest  
54 therein, including easements in airport hazards or land outside  
55 the boundaries of an airport or airport site, as are necessary to  
56 permit the removal, elimination, obstruction-marking or  
57 obstruction-lighting of airport hazards, to prevent the  
58 establishment of airport hazards or to carry out its duties.

59 (f) To acquire, by purchase, gift, devise, lease,  
60 lease-purchase, eminent domain proceedings or otherwise, existing  
61 airports and air navigation facilities. However, an authority  
62 shall not acquire or take over any airport or air navigation  
63 facility owned or controlled by another authority, a municipality  
64 or public agency of this or any other state without the consent of  
65 such authority, municipality or public agency.

66 (g) To establish or acquire and maintain airports in,  
67 over and upon any public waters of this state, and any submerged  
68 lands under such public waters, and to construct and maintain  
69 terminal buildings, landing floats, causeways, roadways and



70 bridges for approaches to or connecting with any such airport, and  
71 landing floats and breakwaters for the protection thereof.

72 (h) To establish, enact and enforce ordinances, rules,  
73 regulations and standards for public safety, aviation safety,  
74 airport operations and the preservation of good order and peace of  
75 the authority; to prevent injury to, destruction of or  
76 interference with public or private property; to protect property,  
77 health and lives and to enhance the general welfare of the  
78 authority by restricting the movements of citizens or any group  
79 thereof on the property of the authority when there is imminent  
80 danger to the public safety because of freedom of movement  
81 thereof; to regulate the entrances to property and buildings of  
82 the authority and the way of ingress and egress to and from the  
83 same; to establish fire limits and to hire firemen, including  
84 aircraft fire and rescue and similar personnel, and to establish  
85 and equip a fire department to provide fire and other emergency  
86 services on any property of the authority; to regulate, restrain  
87 or prohibit construction failing to meet standards established by  
88 the authority; to appoint and discharge police officers with  
89 jurisdiction limited to property of the airport authority and  
90 authorization to enforce the ordinances, rules and regulations of  
91 the authority, as well as the laws of the State of Mississippi,  
92 and to issue citations for infractions of all of such ordinances,  
93 rules, regulations, standards and laws of the State of Mississippi  
94 returnable to the court of appropriate jurisdiction.



95 (i) To develop and operate an industrial park or parks  
96 and exercise all authority provided for under Chapter 7, Title 57,  
97 Mississippi Code of 1972.

98 (j) To attach, pursuant to the power and procedure set  
99 forth in Chapter 33, Title 11, Mississippi Code of 1972, the  
100 equipment of debtors of the authority.

101 (k) To enter into agreements with local governments  
102 pursuant to Section 17-13-1 et seq.

103 (l) To render emergency assistance to other airports  
104 within the United States at an aggregate cost of less than Twenty  
105 Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) per emergency. The assistance  
106 authorized in this paragraph must be rendered within ninety (90)  
107 days after a state of emergency has been declared by the federal  
108 government, or by the local or state government that has  
109 jurisdiction over the area where the airport needing assistance is  
110 located.

111 (m) To enter into joint use or similar agreements with  
112 any department or agency of the United States of America or the  
113 State of Mississippi, including any military department of the  
114 United States of America or the State of Mississippi, with respect  
115 to the use and operation of, or services provided at, any airport  
116 or other property of the authority on the terms and conditions as  
117 the authority may deem appropriate, including provisions limiting  
118 the liability of the United States of America or the State of  
119 Mississippi for loss or damage to the authority if the authority



120 determines that the limitation of liability is reasonable,  
121 necessary and appropriate under the circumstances.

122 (n) To enter into mutual aid agreements with counties  
123 and municipalities for reciprocal emergency aid and assistance in  
124 case of emergencies too extensive to be dealt with unassisted; to  
125 participate in the Statewide Mutual Aid Compact (SMAC) in  
126 accordance with Section 33-15-19.

127 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
128 and after July 1, 2022.

