

By: Representative Pigott

To: Agriculture

HOUSE BILL NO. 363  
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 69-5-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 EXEMPT OR MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY OF PERSONAL IDENTIFYING  
3 INFORMATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS HIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT;  
4 TO AMEND SECTION 69-42-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO DELETE THE  
5 REQUIREMENT FOR PRODUCTION OF ANNUAL REPORTS; TO AMEND SECTION  
6 69-46-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MEETING  
7 VENUES FOR THE MISSISSIPPI LAND, WATER AND TIMBER RESOURCES BOARD  
8 MEETINGS; TO AMEND SECTION 75-45-311, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
9 REPEAL SECTIONS 69-41-1, 69-41-3, 69-41-5, 69-41-7, 69-41-9,  
10 69-41-11, 69-41-13 AND 69-41-19, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH  
11 ARE PROVISIONS ESTABLISHING AND GOVERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF  
12 THE "MISSISSIPPI AGRIBUSINESS COUNCIL ACT OF 1993"; AND FOR  
13 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

15 **SECTION 1.** Section 69-5-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
16 amended as follows:

17 69-5-31. (1) The Department of Agriculture and Commerce is  
18 authorized to hire and designate area law enforcement officers on  
19 a contractual basis to provide security and to enforce all laws of  
20 the State of Mississippi on the Mississippi State Fairgrounds  
21 Complex. All officers must have attended and satisfactorily  
22 completed the training course required for law enforcement  
23 officers at the Law Enforcement Officer's Training Academy or an



24 equivalent facility. All officers must be current with this  
25 certification. A complete record of all law enforcement training  
26 of each employee will be maintained in each employee's record of  
27 employment. Furthermore, the Department of Agriculture and  
28 Commerce may enter into a contract with any certified law  
29 enforcement officer to provide security to the Department of  
30 Agriculture and Commerce with jurisdiction to enforce all laws of  
31 the State of Mississippi on property known as the "Mississippi  
32 State Fairgrounds Complex" and any and all of its outlying  
33 buildings and property.

34 (2) (a) All officers while in performance of their duty on  
35 the premises or at any of the facilities at the Mississippi State  
36 Fairgrounds Complex under the direction or control of the  
37 Department of Agriculture and Commerce and public property  
38 immediately adjacent to such facilities shall:

39 (i) Be required to dress in uniforms prescribed by  
40 the respective law enforcement agency by which he or she is  
41 employed; and

42 (ii) Be authorized to carry weapons.

43 (b) Employees designated as officers shall be duly  
44 sworn and vested with authority to bear arms and make arrests, and  
45 shall exercise primarily the responsibilities of the prevention  
46 and detection of crime, the apprehension of criminals, and the  
47 enforcement of the ordinances and policies of the Department of  
48 Agriculture and Commerce, a political subdivision of the State of



49 Mississippi. Employees designated as such officers shall be  
50 considered law enforcement officers within the meaning of Section  
51 45-6-3.

52 (3) The identities and personal information of the officers  
53 under the authority of this section are confidential and shall not  
54 be publicly disclosed by the department. The Department of  
55 Agriculture and Commerce shall redact the identities and personal  
56 information of officers contracted to serve on the Mississippi  
57 State Fairground Complex, from all contracts disclosed as public  
58 records in compliance with the Mississippi Public Records Act,  
59 prescribed under Section 25-61-1 et seq.; and such law enforcement  
60 contracts shall not be posted on the Department of Finance and  
61 Administration's searchable website, as required by the  
62 Mississippi Accountability and Transparency Act, prescribed under  
63 Section 27-104-151 et seq.

64 **SECTION 2.** Section 69-42-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
65 amended as follows:

66 69-42-1. (1) For the purposes of this section, the  
67 following words shall have the meanings ascribed in this section  
68 unless the context otherwise requires:

69 (a) "Agribusiness" means any agricultural,  
70 aquacultural, horticultural, manufacturing, research and  
71 development or processing enterprise or enterprises.

72 (b) "Farmer" means a resident of Mississippi who  
73 engages or wishes to engage in the commercial production of crops



74 on land in Mississippi. The term shall include individuals,  
75 partnerships and corporations.

76 (2) The Mississippi Development Authority shall develop and  
77 implement a program to stimulate growth in the agricultural  
78 industry for agribusiness concerns and farmers.

79 (3) The program developed and implemented by the Mississippi  
80 Development Authority under this section shall:

81 (a) Increase the availability of financial assistance  
82 available to agribusiness concerns and farmers;

83 (b) Provide incentives for agribusiness concerns and  
84 farmers which will encourage growth in the Mississippi  
85 agricultural industry;

86 (c) Assist new agribusiness concerns and farmers in  
87 developing and implementing business plans;

88 (d) Develop methods for increasing markets for the  
89 goods and services of agribusiness concerns and farmers;

90 (e) Work with public and private entities in  
91 disseminating information about public and private programs that  
92 benefit agribusiness concerns and farmers; and

93 (f) Identify sources of financial assistance available  
94 to agribusiness concerns and farmers and assist agribusiness  
95 concerns and farmers with the preparation of applications for  
96 assistance from public and private sources.

97 \* \* \*



98           **SECTION 3.** Section 69-46-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
99 amended as follows:

100           69-46-3. (1) There is created the Mississippi Land, Water  
101 and Timber Resources Board, hereinafter referred to as "the  
102 board," for the purpose of assisting Mississippi agricultural  
103 industry in the development, marketing and distribution of  
104 agricultural products.

105           (2) The board shall be composed of the following members:

106           (a) The Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee,  
107 or a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee designated by the  
108 chairman, as a nonvoting member;

109           (b) The Chairman of the House of Representatives  
110 Agriculture Committee or a member of the House of Representatives  
111 Agriculture Committee designated by the chairman, as a nonvoting  
112 member;

113           (c) The Chairman of the Senate Forestry Committee, or a  
114 member of the Senate Forestry Committee designated by the  
115 chairman, as a nonvoting member;

116           (d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi  
117 Development Authority, or his designee;

118           (e) The Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of  
119 Agriculture and Commerce, or his designee;

120           (f) The President of the Mississippi Farm Bureau  
121 Federation, or his designee;



122 (g) The Director of the Cooperative Extension Service  
123 at Mississippi State University, or his designee;

124 (h) The Executive Director of the Agribusiness and  
125 Natural Resource Development Center at Alcorn State University, or  
126 his designee;

127 (i) The Director of the Agricultural Finance Division  
128 of the Mississippi Development Authority, or his designee;

129 (j) The Director of the Agriculture Marketing Division  
130 of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, or his  
131 designee;

132 (k) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Forestry  
133 Commission, or his designee; and

134 (l) Three (3) individuals appointed by the Governor who  
135 are active producers of Mississippi land, water or timber  
136 commodities. The Governor shall appoint one (1) such person from  
137 each Supreme Court district.

138 (3) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Development  
139 Authority and the Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of  
140 Agriculture and Commerce shall serve as cochairmen of the board.

141 (4) The board shall meet at least once each calendar quarter  
142 at the call of the cochairmen. A majority of the members of the  
143 board shall constitute a quorum at all meetings. An affirmative  
144 vote of a majority of the members present and voting is required  
145 in the adoption of any actions taken by the board. All members  
146 must be notified, in writing, of all regular and special meetings



147 of the board, which notices must be mailed at least ten (10) days  
148 before the dates of the meetings. All meetings shall take place  
149 at the State Capitol in Jackson, Mississippi, or at a location to  
150 be determined by the cochairmen. The board shall provide a copy  
151 of the minutes of each of its meetings to the Chairman of the  
152 Senate Agriculture Committee and the Chairman of the House of  
153 Representatives Agriculture Committee.

154 (5) Members of the board shall not receive compensation.  
155 However, each member may be paid travel expenses and meals and  
156 lodging expenses as provided in Section 25-3-41, for such expenses  
157 incurred in furtherance of their duties. Travel expenses and  
158 meals and lodging expenses and other necessary expenses incurred  
159 by the board shall be paid out of funds appropriated to the  
160 Mississippi Development Authority.

161 (6) In carrying out the provisions of the Mississippi Land,  
162 Water and Timber Resources Act, the board may utilize the  
163 services, facilities and personnel of all departments, agencies,  
164 offices and institutions of the state, and all such departments,  
165 agencies, offices and institutions shall cooperate with the board  
166 in carrying out the provisions of such act.

167 **SECTION 4.** Sections 69-41-1, 69-41-3, 69-41-5, 69-41-7,  
168 69-41-9, 69-41-11, 69-41-13 and 69-41-19, Mississippi Code of  
169 1972, which are provisions establishing and governing the  
170 administration of the "Mississippi Agribusiness Council Act of  
171 1993," are repealed.



172           **SECTION 5.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
173 and after July 1, 2023.

