

By: Senator(s) Browning

To: Municipalities; Highways
and Transportation

SENATE BILL NO. 2250

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 65-1-8, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE THAT MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SEWER SYSTEMS AND MUNICIPAL GAS
3 SYSTEMS IN MUNICIPALITIES WITH A POPULATION OF 10,000 OR LESS
4 SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO BEAR THE COST OF REMOVAL OR RELOCATION OF
5 THEIR LINES OR FACILITIES FROM THE RIGHTS-OF-WAY OF STATE
6 HIGHWAYS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
7 TRANSPORTATION SHALL BEAR THE COST OF SUCH REMOVAL OR RELOCATION;
8 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 65-1-8, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
11 amended as follows:

12 65-1-8. (1) The Mississippi Transportation Commission shall
13 have the following general powers, duties and responsibilities:

14 (a) To coordinate and develop a comprehensive, balanced
15 transportation policy for the State of Mississippi;

16 (b) To promote the coordinated and efficient use of all
17 available and future modes of transportation;

18 (c) To make recommendations to the Legislature
19 regarding alterations or modifications in any existing
20 transportation policies;

21 (d) To study means of encouraging travel and
22 transportation of goods by the combination of motor vehicle and
23 other modes of transportation;

24 (e) To take such actions as are necessary and proper to
25 discharge its duties pursuant to the provisions of Laws, 1992,
26 Chapter 496, and any other provision of law;

27 (f) To receive and provide for the expenditure of any
28 funds made available to it by the Legislature, the federal
29 government or any other source.



30 (2) In addition to the general powers, duties and
31 responsibilities listed in subsection (1) of this section, the
32 Mississippi Transportation Commission shall have the following
33 specific powers:

34 (a) To make rules and regulations whereby the
35 Transportation Department shall change or relocate any and all
36 highways herein or hereafter fixed as constituting a part of the
37 state highway system, as may be deemed necessary or economical in
38 the construction or maintenance thereof; to acquire by gift,
39 purchase, condemnation or otherwise, land or other property
40 whatsoever that may be necessary for a state highway system as
41 herein provided, with full consideration to be given to the
42 stimulation of local public and private investment when acquiring
43 such property in the vicinity of Mississippi towns, cities and
44 population centers;

45 (b) To enforce by mandamus, or other proper legal
46 remedies, all legal rights or rights of action of the Mississippi
47 Transportation Commission with other public bodies, corporations
48 or persons;

49 (c) To make and publish rules, regulations and
50 ordinances for the control of and the policing of the traffic on
51 the state highways, and to prevent their abuse by any or all
52 persons, natural or artificial, by trucks, tractors, trailers or
53 any other heavy or destructive vehicles or machines, or by any
54 other means whatsoever, by establishing weights of loads or of
55 vehicles, types of tires, width of tire surfaces, length and width
56 of vehicles, with reasonable variations to meet approximate
57 weather conditions, and all other proper police and protective
58 regulations, and to provide ample means for the enforcement of
59 same. The violation of any of the rules, regulations or
60 ordinances so prescribed by the commission shall constitute a
61 misdemeanor. No rule, regulation or ordinance shall be made that
62 conflicts with any statute now in force or which may hereafter be



63 enacted, or with any ordinance of municipalities. A monthly
64 publication giving general information to the boards of
65 supervisors, employees and the public may be issued under such
66 rules and regulations as the commission may determine;

67 (d) To give suitable numbers to highways and to change
68 the number of any highway that shall become a part of the state
69 highway system. However, nothing herein shall authorize the
70 number of any highway to be changed so as to conflict with any
71 designation thereof as a U.S. numbered highway. Where, by a
72 specific act of the Legislature, the commission has been directed
73 to give a certain number to a highway, the commission shall not
74 have the authority to change such number;

75 (e) (i) To make proper and reasonable rules,
76 regulations, and ordinances for the placing, erection, removal or
77 relocation of telephone, telegraph or other poles, signboards,
78 fences, gas, water, sewerage, oil or other pipelines, and other
79 obstructions that may, in the opinion of the commission,
80 contribute to the hazards upon any of the state highways, or in
81 any way interfere with the ordinary travel upon such highways, or
82 the construction, reconstruction or maintenance thereof, and to
83 make reasonable rules and regulations for the proper control
84 thereof. Any violation of such rules or regulations or
85 noncompliance with such ordinances shall constitute a misdemeanor;

86 (ii) Except as otherwise provided for in this
87 paragraph, whenever the order of the commission shall require the
88 removal of, or other changes in the location of telephone,
89 telegraph or other poles, signboards, gas, water, sewerage, oil or
90 other pipelines; or other similar obstructions on the right-of-way
91 or such other places where removal is required by law, the owners
92 thereof shall at their own expense move or change the same to
93 conform to the order of the commission. Any violation of such
94 rules or regulations or noncompliance with such orders shall
95 constitute a misdemeanor;



(iii) Rural water districts, rural water systems, nonprofit water associations and municipal public water systems in municipalities with a population of ten thousand (10,000) or less, according to the latest federal decennial census, shall not be required to bear the cost and expense of removal and relocation of water and sewer lines and facilities constructed or in place in the rights-of-way of state highways. The cost and expense of such removal and relocation, including any unpaid prior to July 1, 2002, shall be paid by the Department of Transportation;

(iv) Municipal public sewer systems and municipal gas systems in municipalities with a population of ten thousand (10,000) or less, according to the latest federal decennial census, shall not be required to bear the cost and expense of removal and relocation of lines and facilities constructed or in place in the rights-of-way of state highways. The cost and expense of such removal and relocation, including any unpaid prior to July 1, 2003, shall be paid by the Department of Transportation;

(f) To regulate and abandon grade crossings on any road fixed as a part of the state highway system, and whenever the commission, in order to avoid a grade crossing with the railroad, locates or constructs said road on one side of the railroad, the commission shall have the power to abandon and close such grade crossing, and whenever an underpass or overhead bridge is substituted for a grade crossing, the commission shall have power to abandon such grade crossing and any other crossing adjacent thereto. Included in the powers herein granted shall be the power to require the railroad at grade crossings, where any road of the state highway system crosses the same, to place signal posts with lights or other warning devices at such crossings at the expense of the railroad, and to regulate and abandon underpass or overhead bridges and, where abandoned because of the construction of a new underpass or overhead bridge, to close such old underpass or



overhead bridge, or, in its discretion, to return the same to the jurisdiction of the county board of supervisors;

(g) To make proper and reasonable rules and regulations to control the cutting or opening of the road surfaces for subsurface installations;

(h) To make proper and reasonable rules and regulations for the removal from the public rights-of-way of any form of obstruction, to cooperate in improving their appearance, and to prescribe minimum clearance heights for seed conveyors, pipes, passageways or other structure of private or other ownership above the highways;

(i) To establish, and have the Transportation Department maintain and operate, and to cooperate with the state educational institutions in establishing, enlarging, maintaining and operating a laboratory or laboratories for testing materials and for other proper highway purposes;

(j) To provide, under the direction and with the approval of the Department of Finance and Administration, suitable offices, shops and barns in the City of Jackson;

(k) To establish and have enforced set-back regulations;

(l) To cooperate with proper state authorities in producing limerock for highway purposes and to purchase same at cost;

(m) To provide for the purchase of necessary equipment and vehicles and to provide for the repair and housing of same, to acquire by gift, purchase, condemnation or otherwise, land or lands and buildings in fee simple, and to authorize the Transportation Department to construct, lease or otherwise provide necessary and proper permanent district offices for the construction and maintenance divisions of the department, and for the repair and housing of the equipment and vehicles of the department; however, in each Supreme Court district only two (2)



162 permanent district offices shall be set up, but a permanent status
163 shall not be given to any such offices until so provided by act of
164 the Legislature and in the meantime, all shops of the department
165 shall be retained at their present location. As many local or
166 subdistrict offices, shops or barns may be provided as is
167 essential and proper to economical maintenance of the state
168 highway system;

169 (n) To cooperate with the Department of Archives and
170 History in having placed and maintained suitable historical
171 markers, including those which have been approved and purchased by
172 the State Historical Commission, along state highways, and to have
173 constructed and maintained roadside driveways for convenience and
174 safety in viewing them when necessary;

175 (o) To cooperate, in its discretion, with the
176 Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks in
177 planning and constructing roadside parks upon the right-of-way of
178 state highways, whether constructed, under construction, or
179 planned; said parks to utilize where practical barrow pits used in
180 construction of state highways for use as fishing ponds. Said
181 parks shall be named for abundant flora and fauna existing in the
182 area or for the first flora or fauna found on the site;

183 (p) Unless otherwise prohibited by law, to make such
184 contracts and execute such instruments containing such reasonable
185 and necessary appropriate terms, provisions and conditions as in
186 its absolute discretion it may deem necessary, proper or
187 advisable, for the purpose of obtaining or securing financial
188 assistance, grants or loans from the United States of America or
189 any department or agency thereof, including contracts with several
190 counties of the state pertaining to the expenditure of such funds;

191 (q) To cooperate with the Federal Highway
192 Administration in the matter of location, construction and
193 maintenance of the Great River Road, to expend such funds paid to
194 the commission by the Federal Highway Administration or other



195 federal agency, and to authorize the Transportation Department to
196 erect suitable signs marking this highway, the cost of such signs
197 to be paid from state highway funds other than earmarked
198 construction funds;

199 (r) To cooperate, in its discretion, with the
200 Mississippi Forestry Commission and the School of Forestry,
201 Mississippi State University, in a forestry management program,
202 including planting, thinning, cutting and selling, upon the
203 right-of-way of any highway, constructed, acquired or maintained
204 by the Transportation Department, and to sell and dispose of any
205 and all growing timber standing, lying or being on any
206 right-of-way acquired by the commission for highway purposes in
207 the future; such sale or sales to be made in accordance with the
208 sale of personal property which has become unnecessary for public
209 use as provided for in Section 65-1-123, Mississippi Code of 1972;

210 (s) To expend funds in cooperation with the Division of
211 Plant Industry, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and
212 Commerce, the United States government or any department or agency
213 thereof, or with any department or agency of this state, to
214 control, suppress or eradicate serious insect pests, rodents,
215 plant parasites and plant diseases on the state highway
216 rights-of-way;

217 (t) To provide for the placement, erection and
218 maintenance of motorist services business signs and supports
219 within state highway rights-of-way in accordance with current
220 state and federal laws and regulations governing the placement of
221 traffic control devices on state highways, and to establish and
222 collect reasonable fees from the businesses having information on
223 such signs;

224 (u) To request and to accept the use of persons
225 convicted of an offense, whether a felony or a misdemeanor, for
226 work on any road construction, repair or other project of the
227 Transportation Department. The commission is also authorized to



request and to accept the use of persons who have not been convicted of an offense but who are required to fulfill certain court-imposed conditions pursuant to Section 41-29-150(d)(1) or 99-15-26, Mississippi Code of 1972, or the Pretrial Intervention Act, being Sections 99-15-101 through 99-15-127, Mississippi Code of 1972. The commission is authorized to enter into any agreements with the Department of Corrections, the State Parole Board, any criminal court of this state, and any other proper official regarding the working, guarding, safekeeping, clothing and subsistence of such persons performing work for the Transportation Department. Such persons shall not be deemed agents, employees or involuntary servants of the Transportation Department while performing such work or while going to and from work or other specified areas;

(v) To provide for the administration of the railroad revitalization program pursuant to Section 57-43-1 et seq.;

(w) The Mississippi Transportation Commission is further authorized, in its discretion, to expend funds for the purchase of service pins for employees of the Mississippi Transportation Department;

(x) To cooperate with the State Tax Commission by providing for weight enforcement field personnel to collect and assess taxes, fees and penalties and to perform all duties as required pursuant to Section 27-55-501 et seq., Sections 27-19-1 et seq., 27-55-1 et seq., 27-59-1 et seq. and 27-61-1 et seq., Mississippi Code of 1972, with regard to vehicles subject to the jurisdiction of the Office of Weight Enforcement. All collections and assessments shall be transferred daily to the State Tax Commission;

(y) The Mississippi Transportation Commission may delegate the authority to enter into a supplemental agreement to a contract previously approved by the commission if the supplemental



agreement involves an additional expenditure not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00);

(z) (i) The Mississippi Transportation Commission, in its discretion, may enter into agreements with any county, municipality, county transportation commission, business, corporation, partnership, association, individual or other legal entity, for the purpose of accelerating the completion date of scheduled highway construction projects.

(ii) Such an agreement may permit the cost of a highway construction project to be advanced to the commission by a county, municipality, county transportation commission, business, corporation, partnership, association, individual or other legal entity, and repaid to such entity by the commission when highway construction funds become available; provided, however, that repayment of funds advanced to the Mississippi Transportation Commission shall be made no sooner than the commission's identified projected revenue schedule for funding of that particular construction project, and no other scheduled highway construction project established by statute or by the commission may be delayed by an advanced funding project authorized under this paragraph (z). Repayments to an entity that advances funds to the Mississippi Transportation Commission under this paragraph (z) may not include interest or other fees or charges, and the total amount repaid shall not exceed the total amount of funds advanced to the commission by the entity.

(iii) In considering whether to enter into such an agreement, the commission shall consider the availability of financial resources, the effect of such agreement on other ongoing highway construction, the urgency of the public's need for swift completion of the project and any other relevant factors.

(iv) Such an agreement shall be executed only upon a finding by the commission, spread upon its minutes, that the acceleration of the scheduled project is both feasible and



293 beneficial. The commission shall also spread upon its minutes its
294 findings with regard to the factors required to be considered
295 pursuant to item (iii) of this paragraph (z).

296 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
297 and after July 1, 2003.

