MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representative Hines To: Ways and Means

HOUSE BILL NO. 23

AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER DELTA PROMISE ZONE ACT OF 2021; TO PROVIDE CERTAIN LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS; TO PROVIDE THE COUNTIES THAT MAKE UP THE COMPOSITION OF THE PROMISE ZONE; TO REQUIRE THE PROMISE ZONE, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, TO USE A REGIONAL APPROACH TO DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE JOB GROWTH AND OFFER NEW INCENTIVES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROMISE ZONE SHALL BE GOVERNED BY A BOARD COMPOSED OF INDIVIDUALS FROM THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROMISE ZONE SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA STRATEGIC COMPACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. This act may be cited as the "Mississippi River Delta Promise Zone Act of 2021."

SECTION 2. (1) The Legislature finds that rural development, through the creation of jobs, will enhance community development and raise educational attainment.

(2) The Legislature further finds that the state should foster open communication between government and the private sectors of our economy in the Mississippi River Delta Region, and that the state should provide a policy, a vision and a framework

to encourage an environment conducive to the revitalization and growth of our state's Delta Region.

(3) The Legislature declares that the public policy of this state requires an overall, comprehensive and coordinated plan for maximum and accelerated revitalization of the Mississippi Delta Region.

SECTION 3. (1) For purposes of this act, the Mississippi River Delta Promise Zone, which may be hereinafter referred to as the Promise Zone, shall be composed of the counties of Adams, Bolivar, Carroll, Claiborne, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Warren, Washington and Yazoo.

(2) The Promise Zone, which is a rural development initiative, shall revitalize the Mississippi Delta Region through the creating of jobs, increasing public/private investment, enhancing community development and raising educational attainment.

(3) The Promise Zone, with the assistance of the Mississippi Development Authority, shall use a regional approach to develop opportunities, to increase job growth and offer new federal, state and local incentives for business development.

(4) To create a better economic climate and increase opportunities for development, the Promise Zone shall use resource generated from the region to leverage other investments.

SECTION 4. (1) The Mississippi Development Authority shall develop new strategies for the economically challenged areas in the Delta Region that will increase business activities for the Promise Zone.

(2) The Promise Zone shall be governed by a board that is composed of individuals from the following entities, but not limited to, these entities:

(a) College and universities;

(b) Counties and municipalities;

(c) Local and regional development organizations;

(d) Banking and finance;

(e) Small business owners; and

(f) Entities that encourage innovation and achievement.

(3) The Promise Zone shall be administered by the Mississippi Delta Strategic Compact, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, whose primary goal is to implement the mandate from the Legislature to begin a region-wide process to revitalize the Mississippi Delta Region, and whose further goal is to implement the 2009 action plan submitted by the Delta Revitalization Task Force, as required by the State Legislature.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.