MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representatives Boyd, Williamson

To: Accountability, Efficiency, Transparency; Appropriations

# HOUSE BILL NO. 663

AN ACT TO CREATE THE REGULATORY REDUCTION PILOT PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PILOT AGENCIES SHALL BE THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE AND THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES; TO REQUIRE EVERY PILOT AGENCY TO REVIEW AND REPORT ON ITS REGULATIONS, RULES AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS; TO REQUIRE EVERY PILOT AGENCY TO REDUCE ITS NUMBER OF REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS BY THIRTY PERCENT BY DECEMBER 31, 2023; TO PROVIDE THAT NO PILOT AGENCY MAY ADOPT A NEW RULE UNLESS IT REMOVES TWO OR MORE EXISTING RULES; TO REQUIRE PEER TO CONDUCT A REVIEW OF THE PILOT AGENCIES; TO AMEND SECTIONS 5-3-57, 25-53-5, 41-3-15, 65-1-8 AND 69-1-203, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO CONFORM TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

**SECTION 1.** The provisions of this act shall be known and may be cited as the "Regulatory Reduction Pilot Program."

**SECTION 2.** The following words and phrases shall have the meanings as defined in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(a) "Pilot agency" or "pilot agencies" means the Mississippi Department of Health, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and

Commerce and the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services.

(b) "Regulation" or "rule" means any statement or instruments of general application, having the force of law, affecting the rights or conduct of any person or business, adopted by a pilot agency in accordance with the authority granted to it by applicable law. Such regulations and rules include administrative rules adopted in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act and any guidance document that includes a regulatory requirement.

(c) "Guidance document" means an agency statement of general applicability that intends to have an effect on the behavior of regulated parties and that sets forth a policy on a statutory, regulatory or technical issue or an interpretation of a statute or regulation. Such documents include, but are not limited to, memoranda, manuals, policy statements, interpretations of law or rules and other material of general applicability.

(d) "Regulatory requirement" means an action that must be taken, or a piece of information that must be provided, as provided in a statute, regulation, policy or form in order to access services, carry out business or pursue legislated privileges.

**SECTION 3.** (1) (a) Each pilot agency shall review each of its regulation, rules and guidance documents and prepare a base inventory, which shall include a numeric count of the regulatory

requirements in its existing regulations, rules and guidance documents.

(b) As part of the review, each pilot agency shall perform the following duties:

(i) Designated a rule review officer to oversee the review;

(ii) Accept written public comments for a period of sixty (60) days;

(iii) Hold at least two (2) public hearings to allow citizens and businesses to identify any regulation, rule or guidance document that is ineffective, unnecessary or unduly burdensome;

(iv) Solicit and incorporate comments and advice from private citizens, stakeholders, regulated entities and other interested parties; and

(v) Complete the review within one hundred twenty (120) days of the effective date of this act.

(c) For each existing regulation, rule or guidance document under its purview, each pilot agency shall affirm the following in a report to the Secretary of State within one hundred eighty (180) days of the effective date of this act:

(i) The number of regulatory requirements in the regulation, rule or guidance document;

(ii) Whether each the regulation, rule or guidance document is mandated by a state or federal law, by a court order, or at the discretion of the pilot agency;

(iii) If the regulation, rule or guidance document is mandated by a state or federal law or by a court order, the specific federal or state law or court order that authorizes the regulation, rule or guidance document;

(iv) Whether the regulation, rule or guidance document is essential to the health, safety or welfare of Mississippi citizens;

(v) Whether the regulation, rule or guidance document is as least restrictive as necessary to protect consumers from present, significant and substantiated harms that threaten public health and safety;

(vi) An estimate of the annual costs imposed by the regulation, rule or guidance document;

(vii) A process and schedule to measure the effectiveness of the regulation, rule or guidance document in the future, including, but not limited to, data that can be used in a retrospective cost-benefit analysis to assess the effectiveness of the regulation, rule or guidance document;

(viii) Alternatives that have been considered instead of the regulation, rule or guidance document; and

(ix) Whether the regulation, rule or guidance document is based on the most up-to-date and credible scientific, technical and economic evidence.

(2) Based on the reports in subsection (1) of this section, each pilot agency shall amend or repeal regulations, rules or guidance documents in its base inventory as necessary to reduce the total number of regulatory requirements by thirty percent (30%), according to the following schedule:

(a) A ten percent (10%) reduction by December 31, 2021;

(b) A twenty percent (20%) reduction by December 31, 2022; and

(c) A thirty percent (30%) reduction by December 31, 2023.

(3) Before proposing a new rule for publication as provided in the Administrative Procedures Act, each pilot agency shall have initiated the repeal of at least two (2) existing rules and provided a statement to the Secretary of State identifying which two (2) rules have been repealed, along with a statement explaining how the repeal will help increase the economic opportunities for the citizens of Mississippi and streamline state government. Once a pilot agency has reduced its regulatory requirements by thirty percent (30%), then each pilot agency shall only be required to repeal one (1) existing rule before proposing a new rule for publication as provided in the Administrative Procedures Act.

**SECTION 4.** (1) The Secretary of State shall make a report on the progress of the Regulatory Reduction Pilot Program each year and submit that report to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Lieutenant Governor by February 1, 2022, February 1, 2023, and February 1, 2024.

(2) If, by February 1, 2024, a pilot agency has not reduced its number of regulatory requirements by thirty percent (30%), the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee shall conduct a budgetary audit of such pilot agencies to determine what, if any, obstacles are preventing the pilot agency from reducing its number of regulatory requirements by thirty percent (30%).

(3) The Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) shall conduct a review of the regulatory reduction efforts of the pilot agencies and report its findings to the Legislature. Such report shall include whether the regulatory requirement reduction section provided in Section 3 of this act is reasonable and achievable and what policies, practices and methods may be adopted by the pilot agencies to help them reduce their regulatory requirements by thirty percent (30%).

**SECTION 5.** Section 5-3-57, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

5-3-57. The committee shall have the following powers:

(a) To conduct, in any manner and at any time deemed appropriate, a performance evaluation of all agencies. It may examine or investigate the budget, files, financial statements, records, documents or other papers of the agency deemed necessary by the committee.

(b) To conduct, in any manner and at any time deemed appropriate, a review of the budget, files, financial statements, records, documents or other papers, as deemed necessary by the committee, of any agency; to make selected review of any funds expended and programs previously projected by such agency; to investigate any and all salaries, fees, obligations, loans, contracts, or other agreements or other fiscal function or activity of any official or employee thereof (including independent contractors where necessary); and to do any and all things necessary and incidental to the purposes specifically set forth in this section.

(c) To conduct an investigation of all agencies which are, in whole or in part, operated or supported by any appropriation or grant of state funds, or which are, in whole or in part, supported or operated by any funds derived from any statewide tax, license fee, or permit fee or which collects or administers any statewide tax, license fee, or permit fee by whatever name called; such committee shall also have full and complete authority to investigate all laws administered and enforced by any such offices, departments, agencies, institutions

and instrumentalities, and the manner and method of the administration and enforcement of such laws; to investigate any evasion of any statewide tax, privilege fee or license fee; to investigate all disbursements of public funds by any office, agency, department, institution or instrumentality specified herein; to study the present laws relative to such agencies, offices, departments, institutions and instrumentalities, and the laws providing for the levying or imposition and collection of any state tax, privilege fee or license fee; to make recommendations to the Legislature as to the correction of any imperfections, inequalities or injustices found to exist in any of such laws, and to do any and all things necessary and incidental to the purposes herein specifically set forth. Provided further that the committee shall upon petition by one-half (1/2) the elected membership of either the Senate or House of Representatives perform a complete investigation and audit of any agency, entity or group subject to investigation or audit by passage of Sections 5-3-51 through 5-3-69.

(d) The committee, in its discretion, if it determines that such action is necessary to carry out the responsibilities of Sections 5-3-51 through 5-3-69, may employ an attorney or attorneys to file or assist the Attorney General's office in filing actions for the recovery of any funds discovered to have been misused or misappropriated and to prosecute or assist in

prosecution of criminal violations, if any, revealed or discovered in the discharging of their duties and responsibilities.

(e) To carry out the provisions of the Regulatory Reduction Pilot Program.

**SECTION 6.** Section 25-53-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

25-53-5. The authority shall have the following powers, duties, and responsibilities:

(a) (i) The authority shall provide for the development of plans for the efficient acquisition and utilization of computer equipment and services by all agencies of state government, and provide for their implementation. In so doing, the authority may use the MDITS' staff, at the discretion of the executive director of the authority, or the authority may contract for the services of qualified consulting firms in the field of information technology and utilize the service of such consultants as may be necessary for such purposes. Pursuant to Section 25-53-1, the provisions of this section shall not apply to the Department of Human Services for a period of three (3) years beginning on July 1, 2017. Pursuant to Section 25-53-1, the provisions of this section shall not apply to the Department of Child Protection Services for a period of three (3) years beginning July 1, 2017.

(ii) [Repealed]

(b) The authority shall immediately institute procedures for carrying out the purposes of this chapter and supervise the efficient execution of the powers and duties of the office of executive director of the authority. In the execution of its functions under this chapter, the authority shall maintain as a paramount consideration the successful internal organization and operation of the several agencies so that efficiency existing therein shall not be adversely affected or impaired. In executing its functions in relation to the institutions of higher learning and junior colleges in the state, the authority shall take into consideration the special needs of such institutions in relation to the fields of teaching and scientific research.

(c) Title of whatever nature of all computer equipment now vested in any agency of the State of Mississippi is hereby vested in the authority, and no such equipment shall be disposed of in any manner except in accordance with the direction of the authority or under the provisions of such rules and regulations as may hereafter be adopted by the authority in relation thereto.

(d) The authority shall adopt rules, regulations, and procedures governing the acquisition of computer and telecommunications equipment and services which shall, to the fullest extent practicable, insure the maximum of competition between all manufacturers of supplies or equipment or services. In the writing of specifications, in the making of contracts relating to the acquisition of such equipment and services, and in

the performance of its other duties the authority shall provide for the maximum compatibility of all information systems hereafter installed or utilized by all state agencies and may require the use of common computer languages where necessary to accomplish the purposes of this chapter. The authority may establish by regulation and charge reasonable fees on a nondiscriminatory basis for the furnishing to bidders of copies of bid specifications and other documents issued by the authority.

(e) The authority shall adopt rules and regulations governing the sharing with, or the sale or lease of information technology services to any nonstate agency or person. Such regulations shall provide that any such sharing, sale or lease shall be restricted in that same shall be accomplished only where such services are not readily available otherwise within the state, and then only at a charge to the user not less than the prevailing rate of charge for similar services by private enterprise within this state.

(f) The authority may, in its discretion, establish a special technical advisory committee or committees to study and make recommendations on technology matters within the competence of the authority as the authority may see fit. Persons serving on the Information Resource Council, its task forces, or any such technical advisory committees shall be entitled to receive their actual and necessary expenses actually incurred in the performance of such duties, together with mileage as provided by law for state

employees, provided the same has been authorized by a resolution duly adopted by the authority and entered on its minutes prior to the performance of such duties.

(g) The authority may provide for the development and require the adoption of standardized computer programs and may provide for the dissemination of information to and the establishment of training programs for the personnel of the various information technology centers of state agencies and personnel of the agencies utilizing the services thereof.

(h) The authority shall adopt reasonable rules and regulations requiring the reporting to the authority through the office of executive director of such information as may be required for carrying out the purposes of this chapter and may also establish such reasonable procedures to be followed in the presentation of bills for payment under the terms of all contracts for the acquisition of computer equipment and services now or hereafter in force as may be required by the authority or by the executive director in the execution of their powers and duties.

(i) The authority shall require such adequate documentation of information technology procedures utilized by the various state agencies and may require the establishment of such organizational structures within state agencies relating to information technology operations as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this chapter.

(j) The authority may adopt such further reasonable rules and regulations as may be necessary to fully implement the purposes of this chapter. All rules and regulations adopted by the authority shall be published and disseminated in readily accessible form to all affected state agencies, and to all current suppliers of computer equipment and services to the state, and to all prospective suppliers requesting the same. Such rules and regulations shall be kept current, be periodically revised, and copies thereof shall be available at all times for inspection by the public at reasonable hours in the offices of the authority. Whenever possible no rule, regulation or any proposed amendment to such rules and regulations shall be finally adopted or enforced until copies of the proposed rules and regulations have been furnished to all interested parties for their comment and suggestions.

(k) The authority shall establish rules and regulations which shall provide for the submission of all contracts proposed to be executed by the executive director for computer equipment or services to the authority for approval before final execution, and the authority may provide that such contracts involving the expenditure of less than such specified amount as may be established by the authority may be finally executed by the executive director without first obtaining such approval by the authority.

(l) The authority is authorized to purchase, lease, or rent computer equipment or services and to operate that equipment and use those services in providing services to one or more state agencies when in its opinion such operation will provide maximum efficiency and economy in the functions of any such agency or agencies.

(m) Upon the request of the governing body of a political subdivision or instrumentality, the authority shall assist the political subdivision or instrumentality in its development of plans for the efficient acquisition and utilization of computer equipment and services. An appropriate fee shall be charged the political subdivision by the authority for such assistance.

(n) The authority shall adopt rules and regulations governing the protest procedures to be followed by any actual or prospective bidder, offerer or contractor who is aggrieved in connection with the solicitation or award of a contract for the acquisition of computer equipment or services. Such rules and regulations shall prescribe the manner, time and procedure for making protests and may provide that a protest not timely filed shall be summarily denied. The authority may require the protesting party, at the time of filing the protest, to post a bond, payable to the state, in an amount that the authority determines sufficient to cover any expense or loss incurred by the state, the authority or any state agency as a result of the

protest if the protest subsequently is determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to have been filed without any substantial basis or reasonable expectation to believe that the protest was meritorious; however, in no event may the amount of the bond required exceed a reasonable estimate of the total project cost. The authority, in its discretion, also may prohibit any prospective bidder, offerer or contractor who is a party to any litigation involving any such contract with the state, the authority or any agency of the state to participate in any other such bid, offer or contract, or to be awarded any such contract, during the pendency of the litigation.

(o) The authority shall make a report in writing to the Legislature each year in the month of January. Such report shall contain a full and detailed account of the work of the authority for the preceding year as specified in Section 25-53-29(3).

All acquisitions of computer equipment and services involving the expenditure of funds in excess of the dollar amount established in Section 31-7-13(c), or rentals or leases in excess of the dollar amount established in Section 31-7-13(c) for the term of the contract, shall be based upon competitive and open specifications, and contracts therefor shall be entered into only after advertisements for bids are published in one or more daily newspapers having a general circulation in the state not less than fourteen (14) days prior to receiving sealed bids therefor. The authority may reserve the right to reject any or all bids, and if

all bids are rejected, the authority may negotiate a contract within the limitations of the specifications so long as the terms of any such negotiated contract are equal to or better than the comparable terms submitted by the lowest and best bidder, and so long as the total cost to the State of Mississippi does not exceed the lowest bid. If the authority accepts one (1) of such bids, it shall be that which is the lowest and best.

(p) When applicable, the authority may procure equipment, systems and related services in accordance with the law or regulations, or both, which govern the Bureau of Purchasing of the Office of General Services or which govern the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services procurement of telecommunications equipment, software and services.

(q) The authority is authorized to purchase, lease, or rent information technology and services for the purpose of establishing pilot projects to investigate emerging technologies. These acquisitions shall be limited to new technologies and shall be limited to an amount set by annual appropriation of the Legislature. These acquisitions shall be exempt from the advertising and bidding requirement.

(r) All fees collected by the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services shall be deposited into the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services Revolving Fund unless otherwise specified by the Legislature.

(s) The authority shall work closely with the council to bring about effective coordination of policies, standards and procedures relating to procurement of remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) resources. In addition, the authority is responsible for development, operation and maintenance of a delivery system infrastructure for geographic information systems data. The authority shall provide a warehouse for Mississippi's geographic information systems data.

(t) The authority shall manage one or more State Data Centers to provide information technology services on a cost-sharing basis. In determining the appropriate services to be provided through the State Data Center, the authority should consider those services that:

(i) Result in savings to the state as a whole;

(ii) Improve and enhance the security and reliability of the state's information and business systems; and

(iii) Optimize the efficient use of the state's information technology assets, including, but not limited to, promoting partnerships with the state institutions of higher learning and community colleges to capitalize on advanced information technology resources.

(u) The authority shall increase federal participation in the cost of the State Data Center to the extent provided by law and its shared technology infrastructure through providing such shared services to agencies that receive federal funds. With

regard to state institutions of higher learning and community colleges, the authority may provide shared services when mutually agreeable, following a determination by both the authority and the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning or the Mississippi Community College Board, as the case may be, that the sharing of services is mutually beneficial.

(v) The authority, in its discretion, may require new or replacement agency business applications to be hosted at the State Data Center. With regard to state institutions of higher learning and community colleges, the authority and the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning or the Mississippi Community College Board, as the case may be, may agree that institutions of higher learning or community colleges may utilize business applications that are hosted at the State Data Center, following a determination by both the authority and the applicable board that the hosting of those applications is mutually beneficial. In addition, the authority may establish partnerships to capitalize on the advanced technology resources of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning or the Mississippi Community College Board, following a determination by both the authority and the applicable board that such a partnership is mutually beneficial.

(w) The authority shall provide a periodic update regarding reform-based information technology initiatives to the

Chairmen of the House and Senate Accountability, Efficiency and Transparency Committees.

(x) The authority shall carry out the provisions of the Regulatory Reduction Pilot Program.

From and after July 1, 2018, the expenses of this agency shall be defrayed by appropriation from the State General Fund. In addition, in order to receive the maximum use and benefit from information technology and services, expenses for the provision of statewide shared services that facilitate cost-effective information processing and telecommunication solutions shall be defrayed by pass-through funding and shall be deposited into the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services Revolving Fund unless otherwise specified by the Legislature. These funds shall only be utilized to pay the actual costs incurred by the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services for providing these shared services to state agencies. Furthermore, state agencies shall work in full cooperation with the Board of the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services to identify computer equipment or services to minimize duplication, reduce costs, and improve the efficiency of providing common technology services across agency boundaries.

**SECTION 7.** Section 41-3-15, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

41-3-15. (1) (a) There shall be a State Department of Health.

(b) The State Board of Health shall have the following powers and duties:

(i) To formulate the policy of the State Department of Health regarding public health matters within the jurisdiction of the department;

(ii) To adopt, modify, repeal and promulgate, after due notice and hearing, and enforce rules and regulations implementing or effectuating the powers and duties of the department under any and all statutes within the department's jurisdiction, and as the board may deem necessary;

(iii) To apply for, receive, accept and expend any federal or state funds or contributions, gifts, trusts, devises, bequests, grants, endowments or funds from any other source or transfers of property of any kind;

(iv) To enter into, and to authorize the executive officer to execute contracts, grants and cooperative agreements with any federal or state agency or subdivision thereof, or any public or private institution located inside or outside the State of Mississippi, or any person, corporation or association in connection with carrying out the provisions of this chapter, if it finds those actions to be in the public interest and the contracts or agreements do not have a financial cost that exceeds the amounts appropriated for those purposes by the Legislature;

(v) To appoint, upon recommendation of the Executive Officer of the State Department of Health, a Director of

Internal Audit who shall be either a Certified Public Accountant or Certified Internal Auditor, and whose employment shall be continued at the discretion of the board, and who shall report directly to the board, or its designee; *** * ***

(vi) To discharge such other duties, responsibilities and powers as are necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter *** * ***; and

(vii) To carry out the provisions of the Regulatory Reduction Pilot Program for the State Department of Health.

(c) The Executive Officer of the State Department of Health shall have the following powers and duties:

(i) To administer the policies of the State Board of Health within the authority granted by the board;

(ii) To supervise and direct all administrative and technical activities of the department, except that the department's internal auditor shall be subject to the sole supervision and direction of the board;

(iii) To organize the administrative units of the department in accordance with the plan adopted by the board and, with board approval, alter the organizational plan and reassign responsibilities as he or she may deem necessary to carry out the policies of the board;

(iv) To coordinate the activities of the various offices of the department;

(v) To employ, subject to regulations of the State Personnel Board, qualified professional personnel in the subject matter or fields of each office, and such other technical and clerical staff as may be required for the operation of the department. The executive officer shall be the appointing authority for the department, and shall have the power to delegate the authority to appoint or dismiss employees to appropriate subordinates, subject to the rules and regulations of the State Personnel Board;

(vi) To recommend to the board such studies and investigations as he or she may deem appropriate, and to carry out the approved recommendations in conjunction with the various offices;

(vii) To prepare and deliver to the Legislature and the Governor on or before January 1 of each year, and at such other times as may be required by the Legislature or Governor, a full report of the work of the department and the offices thereof, including a detailed statement of expenditures of the department and any recommendations the board may have;

(viii) To prepare and deliver to the Chairmen of the Public Health and Welfare/Human Services Committees of the Senate and House on or before January 1 of each year, a plan for monitoring infant mortality in Mississippi and a full report of the work of the department on reducing Mississippi's infant

mortality and morbidity rates and improving the status of maternal and infant health; and

(ix) To enter into contracts, grants and cooperative agreements with any federal or state agency or subdivision thereof, or any public or private institution located inside or outside the State of Mississippi, or any person, corporation or association in connection with carrying out the provisions of this chapter, if he or she finds those actions to be in the public interest and the contracts or agreements do not have a financial cost that exceeds the amounts appropriated for those purposes by the Legislature. Each contract or agreement entered into by the executive officer shall be submitted to the board before its next meeting.

(2) The State Board of Health shall have the authority to establish an Office of Rural Health within the department. The duties and responsibilities of this office shall include the following:

(a) To collect and evaluate data on rural health conditions and needs;

(b) To engage in policy analysis, policy development and economic impact studies with regard to rural health issues;

(c) To develop and implement plans and provide technical assistance to enable community health systems to respond to various changes in their circumstances;

(d) To plan and assist in professional recruitment and retention of medical professionals and assistants; and

(e) To establish information clearinghouses to improve access to and sharing of rural health care information.

(3) The State Board of Health shall have general supervision of the health interests of the people of the state and to exercise the rights, powers and duties of those acts which it is authorized by law to enforce.

(4) The State Board of Health shall have authority:

(a) To make investigations and inquiries with respect to the causes of disease and death, and to investigate the effect of environment, including conditions of employment and other conditions that may affect health, and to make such other investigations as it may deem necessary for the preservation and improvement of health.

(b) To make such sanitary investigations as it may, from time to time, deem necessary for the protection and improvement of health and to investigate nuisance questions that affect the security of life and health within the state.

(c) To direct and control sanitary and quarantine measures for dealing with all diseases within the state possible to suppress same and prevent their spread.

(d) To obtain, collect and preserve such information relative to mortality, morbidity, disease and health as may be

useful in the discharge of its duties or may contribute to the prevention of disease or the promotion of health in this state.

(e) To charge and collect reasonable fees for health services, including immunizations, inspections and related activities, and the board shall charge fees for those services; however, if it is determined that a person receiving services is unable to pay the total fee, the board shall collect any amount that the person is able to pay. Any increase in the fees charged by the board under this paragraph shall be in accordance with the provisions of Section 41-3-65.

(f) (i) To establish standards for, issue permits and exercise control over, any cafes, restaurants, food or drink stands, sandwich manufacturing establishments, and all other establishments, other than churches, church-related and private schools, and other nonprofit or charitable organizations, where food or drink is regularly prepared, handled and served for pay; and

(ii) To require that a permit be obtained from the Department of Health before those persons begin operation. If any such person fails to obtain the permit required in this subparagraph (ii), the State Board of Health, after due notice and opportunity for a hearing, may impose a monetary penalty not to exceed One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00) for each violation. However, the department is not authorized to impose a monetary penalty against any person whose gross annual prepared food sales

are less than Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000.00). Money collected by the board under this subparagraph (ii) shall be deposited to the credit of the State General Fund of the State Treasury.

(g) To promulgate rules and regulations and exercise control over the production and sale of milk pursuant to the provisions of Sections 75-31-41 through 75-31-49.

(h) On presentation of proper authority, to enter into and inspect any public place or building where the State Health Officer or his representative deems it necessary and proper to enter for the discovery and suppression of disease and for the enforcement of any health or sanitary laws and regulations in the state.

(i) To conduct investigations, inquiries and hearings, and to issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the production of books and records at any hearing when authorized and required by statute to be conducted by the State Health Officer or the State Board of Health.

(j) To promulgate rules and regulations, and to collect data and information, on (i) the delivery of services through the practice of telemedicine; and (ii) the use of electronic records for the delivery of telemedicine services.

(k) To enforce and regulate domestic and imported fish as authorized under Section 69-7-601 et seq.

(5) (a) The State Board of Health shall have the authority, in its discretion, to establish programs to promote the public

health, to be administered by the State Department of Health. Specifically, those programs may include, but shall not be limited to, programs in the following areas:

(i) Maternal and child health;

(ii) Family planning;

(iii) Pediatric services;

(iv) Services to crippled and disabled children;

(v) Control of communicable and noncommunicable disease;

(vi) Chronic disease;

(vii) Accidental deaths and injuries;

(viii) Child care licensure;

(ix) Radiological health;

(x) Dental health;

(xi) Milk sanitation;

(xii) Occupational safety and health;

(xiii) Food, vector control and general sanitation;

(xiv) Protection of drinking water;

(xv) Sanitation in food handling establishments open to the public;

(xvi) Registration of births and deaths and other vital events;

(xvii) Such public health programs and services as may be assigned to the State Board of Health by the Legislature or by executive order; and

(xviii) Regulation of domestic and imported fish for human consumption.

(b) The State Board of Health and State Department of Health shall not be authorized to sell, transfer, alienate or otherwise dispose of any of the home health agencies owned and operated by the department on January 1, 1995, and shall not be authorized to sell, transfer, assign, alienate or otherwise dispose of the license of any of those home health agencies, except upon the specific authorization of the Legislature by an amendment to this section. However, this paragraph (b) shall not prevent the board or the department from closing or terminating the operation of any home health agency owned and operated by the department, or closing or terminating any office, branch office or clinic of any such home health agency, or otherwise discontinuing the providing of home health services through any such home health agency, office, branch office or clinic, if the board first demonstrates that there are other providers of home health services in the area being served by the department's home health agency, office, branch office or clinic that will be able to provide adequate home health services to the residents of the area if the department's home health agency, office, branch office or clinic is closed or otherwise discontinues the providing of home

health services. This demonstration by the board that there are other providers of adequate home health services in the area shall be spread at length upon the minutes of the board at a regular or special meeting of the board at least thirty (30) days before a home health agency, office, branch office or clinic is proposed to be closed or otherwise discontinue the providing of home health services.

(c) The State Department of Health may undertake such technical programs and activities as may be required for the support and operation of those programs, including maintaining physical, chemical, bacteriological and radiological laboratories, and may make such diagnostic tests for diseases and tests for the evaluation of health hazards as may be deemed necessary for the protection of the people of the state.

(6) (a) The State Board of Health shall administer the local governments and rural water systems improvements loan program in accordance with the provisions of Section 41-3-16.

(b) The State Board of Health shall have authority:

(i) To enter into capitalization grant agreements with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, or any successor agency thereto;

(ii) To accept capitalization grant awards made under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, as amended;

(iii) To provide annual reports and audits to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, as may be required by federal capitalization grant agreements; and

(iv) To establish and collect fees to defray the reasonable costs of administering the revolving fund or emergency fund if the State Board of Health determines that those costs will exceed the limitations established in the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, as amended. The administration fees may be included in loan amounts to loan recipients for the purpose of facilitating payment to the board; however, those fees may not exceed five percent (5%) of the loan amount.

(7) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, the State Department of Health shall have the following specific powers: The department shall issue a license to Alexander Milne Home for Women, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, for the construction, conversion, expansion and operation of not more than forty-five (45) beds for developmentally disabled adults who have been displaced from New Orleans, Louisiana, with the beds to be located in a certified ICF-MR facility in the City of Laurel, Mississippi. There shall be no prohibition or restrictions on participation in the Medicaid program for the person receiving the license under this subsection (7). The license described in this subsection shall expire five (5) years from the date of its issue. The license authorized by this subsection shall be issued upon the initial payment by the licensee of an application fee of

Sixty-seven Thousand Dollars ($67,000.00) and a monthly fee of Sixty-seven Thousand Dollars ($67,000.00) after the issuance of the license, to be paid as long as the licensee continues to operate. The initial and monthly licensing fees shall be deposited by the State Department of Health into the special fund created under Section 41-7-188.

(8) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, the State Department of Health shall have the following specific powers: The State Department of Health is authorized to issue a license to an existing home health agency for the transfer of a county from that agency to another existing home health agency, and to charge a fee for reviewing and making a determination on the application for such transfer not to exceed one-half (1/2) of the authorized fee assessed for the original application for the home health agency, with the revenue to be deposited by the State Department of Health into the special fund created under Section 41-7-188.

(9) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, the State Department of Health shall have the following specific powers: For the period beginning July 1, 2010, through July 1, 2017, the State Department of Health is authorized and empowered to assess a fee in addition to the fee prescribed in Section 41-7-188 for reviewing applications for certificates of need in an amount not to exceed twenty-five one-hundredths of one percent (.25 of 1%) of the amount of a proposed capital expenditure, but

shall be not less than Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($250.00) regardless of the amount of the proposed capital expenditure, and the maximum additional fee permitted shall not exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00). Provided that the total assessments of fees for certificate of need applications under Section 41-7-188 and this section shall not exceed the actual cost of operating the certificate of need program.

(10) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, the State Department of Health shall have the following specific powers: The State Department of Health is authorized to extend and renew any certificate of need that has expired, and to charge a fee for reviewing and making a determination on the application for such action not to exceed one-half (1/2) of the authorized fee assessed for the original application for the certificate of need, with the revenue to be deposited by the State Department of Health into the special fund created under Section 41-7-188.

(11) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, the State Department of Health shall have the following specific powers: The State Department of Health is authorized and empowered, to revoke, immediately, the license and require closure of any institution for the aged or infirm, including any other remedy less than closure to protect the health and safety of the residents of said institution or the health and safety of the general public.

(12) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, the State Department of Health shall have the following specific powers: The State Department of Health is authorized and empowered, to require the temporary detainment of individuals for disease control purposes based upon violation of any order of the State Health Officer, as provided in Section 41-23-5. For the purpose of enforcing such orders of the State Health Officer, persons employed by the department as investigators shall have general arrest powers. All law enforcement officers are authorized and directed to assist in the enforcement of such orders of the State Health Officer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(g) To carry out the provisions of the Regulatory Reduction Pilot Program for the Mississippi Department of Transportation.

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

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

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

(c) To make and publish rules, regulations and ordinances for the control of and the policing of the traffic on the state highways, and to prevent their abuse by any or all persons, natural or artificial, by trucks, tractors, trailers or any other heavy or destructive vehicles or machines, or by any other means whatsoever, by establishing weights of loads or of vehicles, types of tires, width of tire surfaces, length and width of vehicles, with reasonable variations to meet approximate weather conditions, and all other proper police and protective regulations, and to provide ample means for the enforcement of same. The violation of any of the rules, regulations or ordinances so prescribed by the commission shall constitute a misdemeanor. No rule, regulation or ordinance shall be made that conflicts with any statute now in force or which may hereafter be enacted, or with any ordinance of municipalities. A monthly publication giving general information to the boards of supervisors, employees and the public may be issued under such rules and regulations as the commission may determine;

(d) To give suitable numbers to highways and to change the number of any highway that shall become a part of the state highway system. However, nothing herein shall authorize the

number of any highway to be changed so as to conflict with any designation thereof as a U.S. numbered highway. Where, by a specific act of the Legislature, the commission has been directed to give a certain number to a highway, the commission shall not have the authority to change such number;

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

(ii) Except as otherwise provided for in this paragraph, whenever the order of the commission shall require the removal of, or other changes in the location of telephone, telegraph or other poles, signboards, gas, water, sewerage, oil or other pipelines; or other similar obstructions on the right-of-way or such other places where removal is required by law, the owners thereof shall at their own expense move or change the same to conform to the order of the commission. Any violation of such

rules or regulations or noncompliance with such orders shall 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 owned by 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) permanent district offices shall be set up, but a permanent status shall not be given to any such offices until so provided by act of the Legislature and in the meantime, all shops of the department shall be retained at their present location. As many local or subdistrict offices, shops or barns may be provided as is

essential and proper to economical maintenance of the state highway system;

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

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

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

(q) To cooperate with the Federal Highway Administration in the matter of location, construction and maintenance of the Great River Road, to expend such funds paid to the commission by the Federal Highway Administration or other federal agency, and to authorize the Transportation Department to erect suitable signs marking this highway, the cost of such signs to be paid from state highway funds other than earmarked construction funds;

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

(s) To expend funds in cooperation with the Division of Plant Industry, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, the United States government or any department or agency thereof, or with any department or agency of this state, to control, suppress or eradicate serious insect pests, rodents,

plant parasites and plant diseases on the state highway rights-of-way;

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

(u) To request and to accept the use of persons convicted of an offense, whether a felony or a misdemeanor, for work on any road construction, repair or other project of the 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 * * * Mississippi Department of Revenue 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 * * * Mississippi Department of Revenue;

(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 a private 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 beneficial. The commission shall also spread upon its minutes its findings with regard to the factors required to be considered pursuant to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph (z);

(aa) The Mississippi Transportation Commission, in its discretion, may purchase employment practices liability insurance, and may purchase an excess policy to cover catastrophic losses incurred under the commission's self-insured workers' compensation program authorized under Section 71-3-5. Such policies shall be written by the agent or agents of a company or companies authorized to do business in the State of Mississippi. The deductibles shall be in an amount deemed reasonable and prudent by the commission, and the premiums thereon shall be paid from the State Highway Fund. Purchase of insurance under this paragraph shall not serve as an actual or implied waiver of sovereign immunity or of any protection afforded the commission under the Mississippi Tort Claims Act;

(bb) The Mississippi Transportation Commission is further authorized, in its discretion, to expend funds for the purchase of promotional materials for safety purposes, highway beautification purposes and recruitment purposes;

(cc) To lease antenna space on communication towers which it owns;

(dd) To receive funds from the Southeastern Association of Transportation Officials and from other nonstate sources and expend those funds for educational scholarships in transportation related fields of study. The commission may adopt rules or regulations as necessary for the implementation of the program. A strict accounting shall be made of all funds deposited with the commission and all funds dispersed.

**SECTION 9.** Section 69-1-203, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

69-1-203. The Department of Agriculture and Commerce shall promote the development of agriculture and aquaculture for both native and nonnative species. The department shall be organized into the Administration Office, the Regulatory Office, and the Marketing, Agricultural Development and Finance Office. Each office shall have the duties hereinafter specified in addition to any other duties assigned to it by the commissioner.

The Administration Office shall consist of such employees as may be assigned to it by the commissioner and shall have exclusive responsibility for the following functions of the department:

(a) Accounting;

(b) Payroll;

(c) Purchasing;

(d) Data processing;

(e) Personnel;

(f) Motor pool and vehicles;

(g) Maintenance; and

(h) Printing and records.

The Regulatory Office shall administer those laws relating to the regulation of the labels of syrup containers; the regulation of the sale of planting seed; the regulation of the sale of livestock by weight; the protection of the health of swine; the inspection of grain crops; the testing of the accuracy of petroleum pumps; the inspection of milk manufacturing plants and producers; the establishment of standards for frozen desserts sold in Mississippi; the licensing of exotic bird dealers; the regulation of the disposition of animal and poultry inedible waste; the regulation of the labeling of catfish; the adoption of systems of weights and measures for all commercial purposes in Mississippi; the inspection of meat and poultry and the licensing of facilities used for the processing thereof; and the regulation of the measurement and receiving of pulpwood.

The Marketing, Agricultural Development and Finance Office shall develop direct contact with potential buyers worldwide for the Mississippi agricultural community to expand domestic and international markets; develop and regulate aquaculture production as provided in the Mississippi Aquaculture Act of 1988; and operate and administer the Mississippi Market Bulletin, the Market News Service, the Jim Buck Ross Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum and the Centennial Farm Family Program. This office shall also be responsible for the collection, analysis and

dissemination of statistical data concerning the production, supply, price and other aspects of the state's agricultural economy.

The Department of Agriculture and Commerce shall carry out the provisions of the Regulatory Reduction Pilot Program.

**SECTION 10.** This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.