

FINDINGS AND PURPOSES

Pub. L. 106-554, §1(a)(4) [div. B, title V, §502], Dec. 21, 2000, 114 Stat. 2763, 2763A-268, provided that:

“(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

“(1) the lower Mississippi River region (referred to in this title [enacting this subchapter and amending provisions classified as a note under section 3121 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare] as the ‘region’), though rich in natural and human resources, lags behind the rest of the United States in economic growth and prosperity;

“(2) the region suffers from a greater proportion of measurable poverty and unemployment than any other region of the United States;

“(3) the greatest hope for economic growth and revitalization in the region lies in the development of transportation infrastructure, creation of jobs, expansion of businesses, and development of entrepreneurial local economies;

“(4) the economic progress of the region requires an adequate transportation and physical infrastructure, a skilled and trained workforce, and greater opportunities for enterprise development and entrepreneurship;

“(5) a concerted and coordinated effort among Federal, State, and local agencies, the private sector, and nonprofit groups is needed if the region is to achieve its full potential for economic development;

“(6) economic development planning on a regional or multicounty basis offers the best prospect for achieving the maximum benefit from public and private investments; and

“(7) improving the economy of the region requires a special emphasis on areas of the region that are most economically distressed.

“(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this title are—

“(1) to promote and encourage the economic development of the region—

“(A) to ensure that the communities and people in the region have the opportunity for economic development; and

“(B) to ensure that the economy of the region reaches economic parity with that of the rest of the United States;

“(2) to establish a formal framework for joint Federal-State collaboration in meeting and focusing national attention on the economic development needs of the region;

“(3) to assist the region in obtaining the transportation and basic infrastructure, skills training, and opportunities for economic development that are essential for strong local economies;

“(4) to foster coordination among all levels of government, the private sector, and nonprofit groups in crafting common regional strategies that will lead to broader economic growth;

“(5) to strengthen efforts that emphasize regional approaches to economic development and planning;

“(6) to encourage the participation of interested citizens, public officials, agencies, and others in developing and implementing local and regional plans for broad-based economic and community development; and

“(7) to focus special attention on areas of the region that suffer from the greatest economic distress.”

§ 2009aa-1. Delta Regional Authority

(a) Establishment

(1) In general

There is established the Delta Regional Authority.

(2) Composition

The Authority shall be composed of—

(A) a Federal member, to be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate; and

(B) the Governor (or a designee of the Governor) of each State in the region that elects to participate in the Authority.

(3) Cochairpersons

The Authority shall be headed by—

(A) the Federal member, who shall serve—
(i) as the Federal cochairperson; and
(ii) as a liaison between the Federal Government and the Authority; and

(B) a State cochairperson, who—

(i) shall be a Governor of a participating State in the region; and
(ii) shall be elected by the State members for a term of not less than 1 year.

(b) Alternate members

(1) State alternates

The State member of a participating State may have a single alternate, who shall be—

(A) a resident of that State; and
(B) appointed by the Governor of the State.

(2) Alternate Federal cochairperson

The President shall appoint an alternate Federal cochairperson.

(3) Quorum

A State alternate shall not be counted toward the establishment of a quorum of the Authority in any instance in which a quorum of the State members is required to be present.

(4) Delegation of power

No power or responsibility of the Authority specified in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (c), and no voting right of any Authority member, shall be delegated to any person—
(A) who is not an Authority member; or
(B) who is not entitled to vote in Authority meetings.

(c) Voting

(1) In general—voting

A decision by the Authority shall require the affirmative vote of the Federal cochairperson and a majority of the State members (not including any member representing a State that is delinquent under subsection (g)(2)(C)) to be effective.

(2) Quorum

A quorum of State members shall be required to be present for the Authority to make any policy decision, including—

(A) a modification or revision of an Authority policy decision;
(B) approval of a State or regional development plan; and
(C) any allocation of funds among the States.

(3) Project and grant proposals

The approval of project and grant proposals shall be—

(A) a responsibility of the Authority; and
(B) conducted in accordance with section 2009aa-8 of this title.

(4) Voting by alternate members

An alternate member shall vote in the case of the absence, death, disability, removal, or

resignation of the Federal or State representative for which the alternate member is an alternate.

(d) Duties

The Authority shall—

(1) develop, on a continuing basis, comprehensive and coordinated plans and programs to establish priorities and approve grants for the economic development of the region, giving due consideration to other Federal, State, and local planning and development activities in the region;

(2) not later than 220 days after December 21, 2000, establish priorities in a development plan for the region (including 5-year regional outcome targets);

(3) assess the needs and assets of the region based on available research, demonstrations, investigations, assessments, and evaluations of the region prepared by Federal, State, and local agencies, universities, local development districts, and other nonprofit groups;

(4) formulate and recommend to the Governors and legislatures of States that participate in the Authority forms of interstate cooperation;

(5) work with State and local agencies in developing appropriate model legislation;

(6)(A) enhance the capacity of, and provide support for, local development districts in the region; or

(B) if no local development district exists in an area in a participating State in the region, foster the creation of a local development district;

(7) encourage private investment in industrial, commercial, and other economic development projects in the region; and

(8) cooperate with and assist State governments with economic development programs of participating States.

(e) Administration

In carrying out subsection (d), the Authority may—

(1) hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, receive such evidence, and print or otherwise reproduce and distribute a description of the proceedings and reports on actions by the Authority as the Authority considers appropriate;

(2) authorize, through the Federal or State cochairperson or any other member of the Authority designated by the Authority, the administration of oaths if the Authority determines that testimony should be taken or evidence received under oath;

(3) request from any Federal, State, or local department or agency such information as may be available to or procurable by the department or agency that may be of use to the Authority in carrying out duties of the Authority;

(4) adopt, amend, and repeal bylaws, rules, and regulations governing the conduct of Authority business and the performance of Authority duties;

(5) request the head of any Federal department or agency to detail to the Authority such personnel as the Authority requires to carry out duties of the Authority, each such

detail to be without loss of seniority, pay, or other employee status;

(6) request the head of any State department or agency or local government to detail to the Authority such personnel as the Authority requires to carry out duties of the Authority, each such detail to be without loss of seniority, pay, or other employee status;

(7) provide for coverage of Authority employees in a suitable retirement and employee benefit system by—

(A) making arrangements or entering into contracts with any participating State government; or

(B) otherwise providing retirement and other employee benefit coverage;

(8) accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of services or real, personal, tangible, or intangible property;

(9) enter into and perform such contracts, leases, cooperative agreements, or other transactions as are necessary to carry out Authority duties, including any contracts, leases, or cooperative agreements with—

(A) any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States;

(B) any State (including a political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of the State); or

(C) any person, firm, association, or corporation; and

(10) establish and maintain a central office and field offices at such locations as the Authority may select.

(f) Federal agency cooperation

A Federal agency shall—

(1) cooperate with the Authority; and

(2) provide, on request of the Federal cochairperson, appropriate assistance in carrying out this subchapter, in accordance with applicable Federal laws (including regulations).

(g) Administrative expenses

(1) In general

Administrative expenses of the Authority (except for the expenses of the Federal cochairperson, including expenses of the alternate and staff of the Federal cochairperson, which shall be paid solely by the Federal Government) shall be paid—

(A) by the Federal Government, in an amount equal to 50 percent of the administrative expenses; and

(B) by the States in the region participating in the Authority, in an amount equal to 50 percent of the administrative expenses.

(2) State share

(A) In general

The share of administrative expenses of the Authority to be paid by each State shall be determined by the Authority.

(B) No Federal participation

The Federal cochairperson shall not participate or vote in any decision under subparagraph (A).

(C) Delinquent States

If a State is delinquent in payment of the State's share of administrative expenses of the Authority under this subsection—

(i) no assistance under this subchapter shall be furnished to the State (including assistance to a political subdivision or a resident of the State); and

(ii) no member of the Authority from the State shall participate or vote in any action by the Authority.

(h) Compensation

(1) Federal cochairperson

The Federal cochairperson shall be compensated by the Federal Government at level III of the Executive Schedule in subchapter II of chapter 53 of title 5.

(2) Alternate Federal cochairperson

The alternate Federal cochairperson—

(A) shall be compensated by the Federal Government at level V of the Executive Schedule described in paragraph (1); and

(B) when not actively serving as an alternate for the Federal cochairperson, shall perform such functions and duties as are delegated by the Federal cochairperson.

(3) State members and alternates

(A) In general

A State shall compensate each member and alternate representing the State on the Authority at the rate established by law of the State.

(B) No additional compensation

No State member or alternate member shall receive any salary, or any contribution to or supplementation of salary from any source other than the State for services provided by the member or alternate to the Authority.

(4) Detailed employees

(A) In general

No person detailed to serve the Authority under subsection (e)(6) shall receive any salary or any contribution to or supplementation of salary for services provided to the Authority from—

(i) any source other than the State, local, or intergovernmental department or agency from which the person was detailed; or

(ii) the Authority.

(B) Violation

Any person that violates this paragraph shall be fined not more than \$5,000, imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

(C) Applicable law

The Federal cochairperson, the alternate Federal cochairperson, and any Federal officer or employee detailed to duty on the Authority under subsection (e)(5) shall not be subject to subparagraph (A), but shall remain subject to sections 202 through 209 of title 18.

(5) Additional personnel

(A) Compensation

(i) In general

The Authority may appoint and fix the compensation of an executive director and

such other personnel as are necessary to enable the Authority to carry out the duties of the Authority.

(ii) Exception

Compensation under clause (i) shall not exceed the maximum rate for the Senior Executive Service under section 5382 of title 5, including any applicable locality-based comparability payment that may be authorized under section 5304(h)(2)(C) of that title.

(B) Executive director

The executive director shall be responsible for—

(i) the carrying out of the administrative duties of the Authority;

(ii) direction of the Authority staff; and

(iii) such other duties as the Authority may assign.

(C) No Federal employee status

No member, alternate, officer, or employee of the Authority (except the Federal cochairperson of the Authority, the alternate and staff for the Federal cochairperson, and any Federal employee detailed to the Authority under subsection (e)(5)) shall be considered to be a Federal employee for any purpose.

(i) Conflicts of interest

(1) In general

Except as provided under paragraph (2), no State member, alternate, officer, or employee of the Authority shall participate personally and substantially as a member, alternate, officer, or employee of the Authority, through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, the rendering of advice, investigation, or otherwise, in any proceeding, application, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, or other matter in which, to knowledge of the member, alternate, officer, or employee—

(A) the member, alternate, officer, or employee;

(B) the spouse, minor child, partner, or organization (other than a State or political subdivision of the State) of the member, alternate, officer, or employee, in which the member, alternate, officer, or employee is serving as officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee; or

(C) any person or organization with whom the member, alternate, officer, or employee is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment;

has a financial interest.

(2) Disclosure

Paragraph (1) shall not apply if the State member, alternate, officer, or employee—

(A) immediately advises the Authority of the nature and circumstances of the proceeding, application, request for a ruling or other determination, contract, claim, controversy, or other particular matter presenting a potential conflict of interest;

(B) makes full disclosure of the financial interest; and

(C) before the proceeding concerning the matter presenting the conflict of interest, receives a written determination by the Authority that the interest is not so substantial as to be likely to affect the integrity of the services that the Authority may expect from the State member, alternate, officer, or employee.

(3) Violation

Any person that violates this subsection shall be fined not more than \$10,000, imprisoned not more than 2 years, or both.

(j) Validity of contracts, loans, and grants

The Authority may declare void any contract, loan, or grant of or by the Authority in relation to which the Authority determines that there has been a violation of any provision under subsection (h)(4), subsection (i), or sections 202 through 209 of title 18.

(Pub. L. 87-128, title III, §382B, as added Pub. L. 106-554, §1(a)(4) [div. B, title V, §503], Dec. 21, 2000, 114 Stat. 2763, 2763A-269; amended Pub. L. 107-171, title VI, §6027(a), (b), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 373; Pub. L. 108-447, div. C, title V, §506, Dec. 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 2963; Pub. L. 111-85, title IV, §402, Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2878.)

AMENDMENTS

2009—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 111-85, which directed amendment of section 382B(c) of the Delta Regional Authority Act of 2000 by adding par. (1) and striking out former par. (1), was executed to this section, which is section 382B of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, to reflect the probable intent of Congress. Prior to amendment, text read as follows:

“(A) TEMPORARY METHOD.—During the period beginning on May 13, 2002, and ending on December 31, 2008, a decision by the Authority shall require the affirmative vote of the Federal cochairperson and a majority of the State members (not including any member representing a State that is delinquent under subsection (g)(2)(C) of this section) to be effective.

“(B) PERMANENT METHOD.—Effective beginning on January 1, 2009, a decision by the Authority shall require a majority vote of the Authority (not including any member representing a State that is delinquent under subsection (g)(2)(C) of this section) to be effective.”

2004—Subsec. (c)(1)(A). Pub. L. 108-447, §506(1), substituted “2008” for “2004”.

Subsec. (c)(1)(B). Pub. L. 108-447, §506(2), substituted “2009” for “2005”.

2002—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 107-171, §6027(a), added par. (1) and struck out heading and text of former par. (1). Text read as follows: “A decision by the Authority shall require a majority vote of the Authority (not including any member representing a State that is delinquent under subsection (g)(2)(C) of this section) to be effective.”

Subsec. (e)(4). Pub. L. 107-171, §6027(b), substituted “, rules, and regulations” for “and rules”.

§ 2009aa-2. Economic and community development grants

(a) In general

The Authority may approve grants to States and public and nonprofit entities for projects, approved in accordance with section 2009aa-8 of this title—

(1) to develop the transportation infrastructure of the region for the purpose of facilitating economic development in the region (ex-

cept that grants for this purpose may only be made to a State or local government);

(2) to assist the region in obtaining the job training, employment-related education, and business development (with an emphasis on entrepreneurship) that are needed to build and maintain strong local economies;

(3) to provide assistance to severely distressed and underdeveloped areas that lack financial resources for improving basic public services;

(4) to provide assistance to severely distressed and underdeveloped areas that lack financial resources for equipping industrial parks and related facilities; and

(5) to otherwise achieve the purposes of this subchapter.

(b) Funding

(1) In general

Funds for grants under subsection (a) may be provided—

(A) entirely from appropriations to carry out this section;

(B) in combination with funds available under another Federal or Federal grant program; or

(C) from any other source.

(2) Priority of funding

To best build the foundations for long-term economic development and to complement other Federal and State resources in the region, Federal funds available under this subchapter shall be focused on the activities in the following order or priority:

(A) Basic public infrastructure in distressed counties and isolated areas of distress.

(B) Transportation infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating economic development in the region.

(C) Business development, with emphasis on entrepreneurship.

(D) Job training or employment-related education, with emphasis on use of existing public educational institutions located in the region.

(Pub. L. 87-128, title III, §382C, as added Pub. L. 106-554, §1(a)(4) [div. B, title V, §503], Dec. 21, 2000, 114 Stat. 2763, 2763A-274; amended Pub. L. 107-171, title VI, §6027(c), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 373.)

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 107-171 struck out heading and text of par. (3). Text read as follows: “Notwithstanding any provision of law limiting the Federal share in any grant program, funds appropriated to carry out this section may be used to increase a Federal share in a grant program, as the Authority determines appropriate.”

§ 2009aa-3. Supplements to Federal grant programs

(a) Finding

Congress finds that certain States and local communities of the region, including local development districts, may be unable to take maximum advantage of Federal grant programs for which the States and communities are eligible because—