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Chapter No. 344
10/HR03/R363PH
CT / 98

HOUSE BILL NO. 226

Originated in House Don Richardson Clerk

HOUSE BILL NO. 226

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 77-15-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO DELETE THE REPEALER ON THE STATUTE CREATING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE CHICKASAWHAY NATURAL GAS DISTRICT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 77-15-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

77-15-1. (1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, all local natural gas districts containing two (2) or more municipalities and nonmunicipal customers shall establish and maintain a board of directors composed of: (a) the mayors of each municipality within the district whose terms shall be concurrent with their terms of office as mayor; and (b) one (1) system-user from each county within the district, who shall not be a public official. The county system-user board members shall be elected by the system-users residing outside of a municipality, in the county in which such board member resides. In order to qualify as a candidate for election to the board, each person shall obtain, on a petition, twenty-five (25) signatures from system-users in the county in which such person resides. The signatures shall be of system-users residing outside of a municipality and the candidate shall be a system-user who resides outside of a municipality. The board shall call an election within fifteen (15) days after July 1, 1989, to be held within sixty (60) days from the date such election is called. From and after July 1, 2007, the procedures for, and conduct of, the election of board members of the district shall be held in

accordance with the provisions of subsection (6) of this section. Those persons elected to the board shall serve until the next general election for supervisors and the election for such board members thereafter shall be held at the same time as the supervisor elections and the terms of such board members shall be concurrent with the terms of the supervisors. The board of directors, including any mayors who serve on the board, shall be entitled to compensation as follows: (a) the chairperson of the board shall receive Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($250.00) per month, and (b) all other board members shall receive Two Hundred Dollars ($200.00) per month. The chairperson and vice chairperson shall be elected by and from the entire membership of the governing board at the first meeting in July of each year. The vice chairperson shall preside over meetings as the chairperson in the absence or incapacity of the chairperson. In addition, an official meeting may be called at any time by a two-thirds (2/3) proclamation by the board membership.

(2) Two (2) board municipal/county system-user board members who reside in his or her respective county, and must be customers of the district, and who must be system-users shall be appointed as follows for his or her initial term: (a) one (1) board member from the county lying in the northern section of the district, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor; and (b) one (1) board member from the county lying in the southern section of the district, appointed by the Governor. The appointed board municipal/county system-user board members may be elected public officials.

The initial terms of the two (2) municipal/county system-user board members shall begin July 1, 2005, and shall serve until June 30, 2008, and thereafter the municipal/county system-user board members, as described in this subsection (2), shall be elected by the municipal and county system-users as follows: The successors in office to the board member who was appointed from the county lying in the northern section of the district shall be elected

only by the municipal and county system-users who reside in that county and not by all of the system-users in the district. The successors in office to the board member who was appointed from the county lying in the southern section of the district shall be elected only by the municipal and county system-users who reside in that county and not by all of the system-users in the district.

The municipal/county system-user board members shall be compensated as prescribed in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) All board members shall file any required statements of economic interest with the Ethics Commission as required by law. This section shall not apply to any local natural gas district which leases its distribution system to an investor-owned utility company regulated by the Public Service Commission.

(4) From and after July 1, 2004, the Board of Directors of the Chickasawhay Natural Gas District shall discontinue distribution of any of the revenues of the district to municipalities within the district.

(5) The provisions of this section shall only apply to the Chickasawhay Natural Gas District.

(6) The provisions of this subsection shall govern the procedure for, and conduct of, any election of the board of directors of the district. The board may adopt any rules and regulations pertaining to the election of the board of directors of the district that are not inconsistent and do not conflict with the provisions of this subsection.

(a) Notice of the election of one or more members of the board of directors shall be sent by regular United States mail to each system-user not less than thirty (30) days and not more than sixty (60) days from the election date. The notice shall state the time, place and manner in which the system-users may vote for the board of directors.

(b) The election shall be held in a manner and according to procedures to be established by rules and regulations

adopted by the board before the giving of notice of the election, and a printed copy of such rules and regulations shall accompany the notice.

(c) The rules and regulations for the conduct of the election shall include the following provisions:

(i) To qualify as a candidate, a person shall not be a public official and must be a county system-user and such person must submit to the board, not less than twenty (20) days before the election, a petition containing the signatures of twenty-five (25) system-users in the county in which the candidate resides;

(ii) Notice of the nomination of qualified candidates sent by regular United States mail to the system-users at least ten (10) days before the date of the election;

(iii) The method of voting on the date of the election shall be by personal attendance at the district's office in Waynesboro, by personal attendance at the district's office in Quitman, or by proxy;

(iv) Each system-user shall have one (1) vote, provided that when a billing for service is made to more than one (1) person at a single address or location, each such person shall be limited to casting a pro rata share of the one (1) vote to which the billing address or location is entitled; and

(v) The time of the election shall be fixed between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on a day of the week other than Sunday.

(d) A certified public accountant appointed by the board shall count all votes, whether cast by personal attendance or by proxy, and he shall certify the results of the election to the board within ten (10) days of the election.

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SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2010.

PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 27, 2010

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PASSED BY THE SENATE
March 3, ~~2010~~

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR

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