

Existing law (uncodified) creates the Ernest N. Morial-New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority (Authority) to acquire, construct, reconstruct, extend, improve, maintain, and operate projects within the city of New Orleans in order to promote the economic growth and development of the city and its neighboring parishes.

Existing law defines "project" as any convention, exhibition, or tourist facility, other than lodging facilities, and the necessary furnishings, machinery, equipment, and items incidental thereto. New law includes within the definition of "project", infrastructure and site improvements to facilitate the private development and funding of lodging facilities.

Existing law authorizes the Authority to enter into contracts to acquire, construct, reconstruct, extend, improve, maintain, or operate projects relative to restaurants, retail outlets, offices, parking, entertainment, and similar activities. New law authorizes the Authority to enter into such contracts relative to hotels.

Existing law exempts the Authority from state law on the letting of public contracts for the making of any public works or for the purchase of any materials or supplies as it relates to any lease or sublease for allied services such as restaurants, retail outlets, offices, and entertainment. New law extends such exemption to hotel services.

Existing law authorizes the Authority to incur debt and issue bonds.

Prior law specifically prohibited the authority from utilizing nontraditional tax-free bonds from any source when use of these bonds would benefit any properties being developed by a private person, firm, or corporation. New law eliminates this prohibition.

Existing law authorizes "expansion projects" including Phase III and IV. New law authorizes Phase V which is a tourism development plan to enhance the Convention Center and install basic infrastructure to facilitate private development, including private development of lodging facilities, on property owned by the Exhibition Hall Authority, the public component of which is divided into the following four stages:

- (1) Public infrastructure improvements on Convention Center Blvd., from Poydras St. to Orange St., including utility improvements, redevelopment of traffic lanes, a linear park and pedestrian mall, and the relocation and redevelopment of traffic along S. Peters St. and Tchoupitoulas St.; public infrastructure improvements by Henderson St., Tchoupitoulas St., Orange St., and the Mississippi River flood wall to extend Convention Center Blvd. from Henderson St. to Orange St., public utility infrastructure to support anticipated private development, and soil remediation; and the relocation of existing power lines along Convention Center Blvd. and the incorporation of a "people mover" system along Convention Center Blvd., from Poydras St. to Orange St. Such projects shall neither impair nor reduce current vehicular traffic capacity in that area, particularly with respect to any improvements in the vicinity of Convention Center Blvd. and Poydras and Orange Streets.
- (2) Development of a riverfront festival park along the Mississippi River at existing wharfs, providing access to the river through the development of approximately five acres for recreational, hospitality, commercial, and residential use; and development of Riverfront Festival Park infrastructure, including public utilities, lighting, and landscaping.
- (3) Integration of the Convention Center with its surrounding urban areas through the renovation of the south end of the existing Convention Center by creating a new south entrance; and development of an executive conference center which may be integrated as part of a new, privately developed hotel. Such projects shall not impair nor diminish access to port facilities via Henderson St.
- (4) Renovation, restoration, construction, or demolition of building or buildings and site preparation related thereto, to facilitate the creation and development of a riverfront

festival park. Such activity shall not interfere with the main line track of the N.O. Public Belt Railroad.

New law authorizes the Authority from time to time, with the approval of the State Bond Commission, to issue its negotiable bonds in one or more series for the purpose of providing funds to finance Phase V; said bonds to be payable from all revenues derived by the Authority as more particularly set forth in the resolutions providing for their issuance.

New law provides that this Act does not nor is it intended to impair outstanding bonded debt obligations of the Authority, and to any extent that any provision of this Act is inconsistent with other laws, this Act prevails. Further provides that provisions of new law shall not affect, alter, or diminish any rights or powers of the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans with respect to any property it owns, operates, or administers.

Effective upon signature of governor (June 9, 2014).

(Amends §§4(intro. para.), 4D, 4G, 4M, 20A, and 23 of Act No. 305 of the 1978 R.S., as amended; Adds §20F to Act No. 305 of the 1978 R.S., as amended)