§ 1803. Purposes of the authority. The purposes of the authority shall be:

1. To assist, promote, encourage, develop and advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of the state and to improve their standard of living.

2. To improve employment opportunities in any area of the state by assisting in financing of:

(a) the cost of projects for the construction, acquisition, rehabilitation or improvement of any new, existing or former (i) industrial or manufacturing plant, (ii) building used for research and development, or (iii) other eligible business facility within the state, including the acquisition of real property therefor, by means of loans to non-profit local development corporations not to exceed forty percent of the cost of such project, the repayment of which shall be secured by a mortgage which shall not be a junior encumbrance thereon by more than fifty percent of such cost, and by means of the guarantees of the loans made by banking organizations which guaranty shall not exceed eighty percent of the cost of the project, provided, however, that such loans may be in excess of forty percent but shall not exceed sixty percent of the cost of such project for loans in economically distressed areas and to companies in need of special assistance pursuant to the provisions of subdivision seven of section eighteen hundred twenty-three of this chapter.

(b) the purchase of machinery and equipment for use within the state, by means of loans to non-profit local development corporations not to exceed forty percent of the cost of such purchase which shall be secured by a security interest in such project, and by means of the guarantee of loans made by banking organizations which guaranty shall not exceed eighty percent of the cost of the project, provided, however, that such loans may be in excess of forty percent but shall not exceed sixty percent of the cost of such project for loans in economically distressed areas and to companies in need of special assistance pursuant to the provisions of subdivision seven of section eighteen hundred twenty-three of this chapter.

3. To advance the development of industrial, manufacturing, research and development, or other eligible business enterprises throughout the state, including those defined as small business concerns under the act of congress entitled "Small Business Investment Act of 1958".

4. To assist in financing the cost of projects for the construction, acquisition, rehabilitation or improvement of pollution control facilities, by means of loans of pollution control funds to non-profit local development corporations not to exceed ninety percent of the cost of any such project.

In carrying out the purposes of this section and in exercising the powers granted under this act, the authority shall be regarded as performing an essential governmental function.