

By: Representative Ellington

To: Conservation and
Water Resources

HOUSE BILL NO. 1209
(As Passed the House)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-15-84, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO AUTHORIZE THE IMPORTATION OF FEMALE SPONGE CRABS UNDER CERTAIN
3 CIRCUMSTANCES; TO REPEAL SECTION 49-15-85, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
4 1972, WHICH PROHIBITS THE TAKING OF FEMALE CRABS BEARING EGGS; AND
5 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 SECTION 1. Section 49-15-84, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 49-15-84. (1) The commission shall coordinate with the Gulf
10 Coast Research Laboratory in the development of an ordinance for
11 the purpose of taking callinectes sapidus (blue crab) or allied
12 species. The ordinance shall include provisions for the
13 establishment of size limits for individual or market use as well
14 as establishing legal harvest size for the cultivating of peeler
15 crabs and soft-shell crabs.

16 (2) The commission shall establish minimum specifications
17 for crab traps and shall require buoys of adequate size which are
18 identified as to the owner of the buoys and traps. Within the
19 bays and bayous recreational crabbers may use no more than six (6)
20 crab traps per household. The taking of crabs with drop nets is
21 permitted without a license.

22 (3) It is unlawful to catch, hold or have in possession any

23 female sponge crab or any female crab bearing visible eggs at any
24 time within marine waters. It is not unlawful to catch those
25 crabs unintentionally, if the crabs are immediately returned to
26 the water. The provisions of this section shall not apply to the
27 importation of female crabs during closed season from other
28 coastal states where the taking and possession of such crabs is
29 lawful, provided that each shipment or load of such imported
30 female sponge crabs shall have with it either an invoice from a
31 licensed harvester in a state which legally allows their taking,
32 or a certificate from that state's appropriate agency verifying
33 that the crabs were taking legally.

34 (4) During open seasons and in open areas, crabs may be
35 taken with any legal crab traps (pots), drop nets, dip nets, or
36 cast nets.

37 SECTION 2. Section 49-15-85, Mississippi Code of 1972, which
38 prohibits the taking of female crabs bearing eggs, is repealed.

39 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
40 and after its passage.