

By: Ellington

To: Conservation and  
Water Resources

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1086

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-15-84, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO ALLOW THE IMPORTATION OF CERTAIN FEMALE SPONGE CRABS, IF THE  
3 TAKING AND POSSESSION OF THOSE CRABS IS LAWFUL IN THE STATE OF  
4 ORIGIN; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

8 49-15-84. (1) The commission shall coordinate with the Gulf  
9 Coast Research Laboratory in the development of an ordinance for  
10 the purpose of taking *Callinectes sapidus* (blue crab) or allied  
11 species. The ordinance shall include provisions for the  
12 establishment of size limits for individual or market use as well  
13 as establishing legal harvest size for the cultivating of peeler  
14 crabs and soft-shell crabs.

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

21 (3) (a) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, it  
22 is unlawful to catch, hold or have in possession any female sponge  
23 crab or any female crab bearing visible eggs at any time within  
24 marine waters. It is not unlawful to catch those crabs  
25 unintentionally, if the crabs are immediately returned to the  
26 water.

27 (b) This section shall not apply to the importation of

28 the female crabs during closed season from other states where the  
29 taking and possession of those crabs is lawful. Each ship or load  
30 of imported female sponge crabs shall have with it either an  
31 invoice from a licensed harvester in a state which legally allows  
32 their taking, or a certificate from that state's marine resources  
33 regulatory agency verifying that the crabs were taken legally.

34 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
35 and after July 1, 2000.