

By: Ellington

To: Conservation and  
Water Resources;  
Appropriations

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1326

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE CREATION OF A CHANNEL MAINTENANCE  
2 AND BEACH NOURISHMENT PROGRAM; TO EXPRESS THE FINDINGS OF THE  
3 LEGISLATURE; TO REQUIRE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHANNEL MAINTENANCE  
4 AND BEACH NOURISHMENT PLAN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES;  
5 TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES TO IDENTIFY AND  
6 PURSUE FEDERAL FUNDING ALTERNATIVES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the  
9 "Channel Maintenance and Beach Nourishment Act."

10 SECTION 2. The Legislature finds that coastal erosion poses  
11 a threat to the economy, property and general welfare of the  
12 people of the State of Mississippi. Channel maintenance is  
13 necessary to preserve and enhance the economic stability and  
14 recreational potential of the coastal region. The Legislature  
15 declares it to be a governmental responsibility to manage and  
16 protect Mississippi's beaches by reducing the effects of coastal  
17 erosion and to provide for proper channel maintenance. The  
18 Legislature further declares that channel maintenance and beach  
19 nourishment projects are in the public interest. Those projects  
20 should be funded to promote the use of cost-efficient strategies,  
21 encourage coordination among federal, state and local governments  
22 and the private sector, provide for long-term solutions and  
23 minimize the impact of the environment to the extent possible.

24 SECTION 3. (1) The Department of Marine Resources, referred  
25 to in this act as "department," shall serve as the primary state  
26 agency with regard to coordinating channel maintenance and beach  
27 nourishment activities along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

28 (2) The department shall develop a comprehensive long-range

29 management plan for the preservation and nourishment of  
30 Mississippi's beaches and for channel maintenance activities. The  
31 plan shall at a minimum:

32 (a) Identify areas in which coastal erosion is  
33 threatening the state's beaches and areas where channels are in  
34 need of maintenance;

35 (b) Identify the causes of coastal erosion, estimate  
36 erosion rates, and project the long-term erosion potential for  
37 identified beaches;

38 (c) Evaluate the impacts of near-shore development on  
39 coastal erosion and channel maintenance needs;

40 (d) Assess the short-term and long-term economic costs  
41 and benefits of the state's beaches and channels;

42 (e) Recommend appropriate management measures for the  
43 beaches threatened by coastal erosion, including beach nourishment  
44 projects;

45 (f) Promote channel sand by-passing to replicate the  
46 natural flow of sand; and

47 (g) Recommend channel maintenance and beach nourishment  
48 projects to the Legislature for funding which ensures the  
49 geographic coordination and sequencing of prioritized projects.

50 SECTION 4. (1) The department shall identify federal  
51 funding mechanisms which could be used to fund projects regarding  
52 channel maintenance and beach nourishment. The department shall  
53 coordinate with local governments and other interest groups to  
54 maximize the eligibility of projects for funding and to assist in  
55 the preparation of appropriate financial assistance documentation.

56 (2) The department may apply for, receive and expend  
57 federal, state, local and any other public or private funds for  
58 channel maintenance and beach nourishment.

59 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
60 and after July 1, 2000.