AN ACT TO AMEND CHAPTER 478, GENERAL LAWS OF 1998, AS AMENDED
BY CHAPTER 551, GENERAL LAWS OF 1999, TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF THE
JOINT NATURAL AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY COMMITTEE FOR ONE YEAR; AND
FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 478, General Laws of 1998, as amended by
Chapter 551, General Laws of 1999, is amended as follows:

Section 1. (1) The natural and scenic river study
committee, created under Chapter 478, General Laws of 1998, is
continued and reconstituted, and shall continue to function until
it is dissolved under subsection (5) of this section. The
committee shall consist of the following members: (a) the
Chairman of the House Game and Fish Committee; the Chairman of the
House Conservation and Water Resources Committee; the Chairman of
the House Agriculture Committee; and two (2) members of each of
such committees to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and
(b) the Chairman of the Senate Wildlife and Fisheries Committee;
the Chairman of the Senate Environmental Protection, Conservation
and Water Resources Committee; the Chairman of the Senate
Agriculture Committee; and two (2) members of each of such
committees to be appointed by the chairman of the respective
Senate committees.

The Chairman of the House Game and Fish Committee and the
Chairman of the Senate Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Committee
shall serve as cochair of the study committee.

For attending meetings of the committee, each legislative
member shall be paid per diem in the amount authorized by Section
25-3-69 and a mileage allowance and an expense allowance in the amount authorized by Section 5-1-47 from the contingent expense fund of his respective house. However, no per diem, mileage allowance or expense allowance shall be paid for attending meetings of the committee while the Legislature is in session, and no per diem, mileage allowance or expense allowance shall be paid without prior approval of the proper committee in the member's respective house.

(2) In conducting its activities, the committee may elicit the support of and participation by any commercial, industrial, governmental, environmental, minority and public interest organizations and associations, or individual members thereof, and any federal, state and local agencies and political subdivisions as may be necessary or appropriate in the furtherance of the study.

(3) The Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall coordinate the study of certain natural and scenic rivers in the state. The study shall be conducted in order to assess and document the ecological, scenic, recreational and natural characteristics of these rivers; to consider the feasibility of a program for conserving the quality of scenic rivers; to recommend a plan of nonregulatory incentive programs to encourage landowner participation in any stream protection program that may be recommended; to ensure any activities on a natural and scenic river shall be according to best management practices; to ensure that any natural and scenic river program shall be administered solely by the State of Mississippi.

(4) The committee shall seek public oral and written comments on the scenic rivers.

(5) The committee shall prepare a report of the study with recommendations and file the report with the Legislature by January 4, 2001. Upon presentation of its report to the Legislature, the committee shall be dissolved.

(6) For purpose of the study, a "natural and scenic river" means a river, stream or bayou or segment thereof that is in a free-flowing condition, that has not been channelized, cleared and snagged within the past five (5) years, realigned, inundated or
otherwise altered and has a shoreline covered by native vegetation and has no or few man-made structures along its banks.

Section 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

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