

By: Hewes

To: Ports and Marine
Resources;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2600
(As Sent to Governor)

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

10 SECTION 2. The Legislature finds that channel maintenance is
11 necessary to preserve and enhance the economic stability and
12 recreational potential of the coastal region. The Legislature
13 declares it to be a governmental responsibility to provide for
14 proper channel maintenance. The Legislature further declares that
15 channel maintenance projects are in the public interest. Those
16 projects should be funded to promote the use of cost-efficient
17 strategies, encourage coordination among federal, state and local
18 governments and the private sector, provide for long-term
19 solutions and minimize the impact of the environment to the extent
20 possible.

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

25 (2) The department shall develop a comprehensive long-range
26 management plan for channel maintenance activities. The plan
27 shall at a minimum:

28 (a) Identify areas in which channels are in need of

29 maintenance;

30 (b) Assess the short-term and long-term economic costs
31 and benefits of the state's channels;

32 (c) Promote channel sand bypassing to replicate the
33 natural flow of sand; and

34 (d) Recommend channel maintenance projects to the
35 Legislature for funding which ensures the geographic coordination
36 and sequencing of prioritized projects.

37 SECTION 4. The department shall identify federal funding
38 mechanisms which could be used to fund projects regarding channel
39 maintenance. The department shall coordinate with local
40 governments and other interest groups to maximize the eligibility
41 of projects for funding and to assist in the preparation of
42 appropriate financial assistance documentation.

43 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect and be in force from
44 and after July 1, 2001.