MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2000

By: Hewes
To: Finance

SENATE BILL NO. 2768
(As Passed the Senate)

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF DISTINCTIVE MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE TAGS DISPLAYING AN EMBLEM DESIGNED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES; TO PROVIDE THAT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF THE FEES PAID FOR SUCH TAGS SHALL BE DEPOSITED INTO THE COASTAL PRESERVE ACCOUNT WITHIN THE SEAFOOD FUND; TO AMEND SECTION 49-15-17, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ESTABLISH THE COASTAL PRESERVE ACCOUNT WITHIN THE SEAFOOD FUND; TO PROVIDE THAT FUNDS IN SUCH ACCOUNT SHALL BE UTILIZED FOR THE MANAGEMENT, IMPROVEMENT AND ACQUISITION OF COASTAL PRESERVES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) Owners of motor vehicles upon complying with the motor vehicle laws relating to registration and licensing of motor vehicles, and upon payment of the road and bridge privilege taxes, ad valorem taxes and registration fees as prescribed by law for private carriers of passengers, pickup trucks and other noncommercial motor vehicles, and upon payment of an additional annual fee in the amount of Thirty Dollars ($30.00), shall be issued a special license tag which displays an emblem designed by the Department of Marine Resources.

(2) The Department of Marine Resources shall design emblems which shall be displayed on the special license tag. The emblem shall be affixed during the production of the license tag.

(3) Application for the special license tags shall be made to the county tax collector on forms prescribed by the State Tax Commission. The application and the additional fee, less five percent (5%) thereof to be retained by the tax collector, shall be remitted to the State Tax Commission within seven (7) days of the date the application is made. The portion of the additional fee retained by the tax collector shall be deposited into the county
(4) The special license tag shall be issued for a one-year period. The additional annual fee shall be due and payable at the time of renewal registration.

(5) The State Tax Commission shall deposit all fees into the State Treasury on the day received. At the end of each month, the State Tax Commission shall certify the total fees collected under this section to the State Treasurer who shall distribute such collections as follows:

(a) Twenty Dollars ($20.00) of each additional fee collected on special license tags issued pursuant to this section shall be deposited into the Coastal Preserve Account in the Seafood Fund created pursuant to Section 49-15-17.

(b) One Dollar ($1.00) of each additional fee collected on special license tags shall be deposited into the Mississippi Fire Fighter's Memorial Burn Center Fund created pursuant to Section 7-9-70.

(c) The remainder of each such additional fee shall be deposited to the credit of the State Highway Fund to be expended solely for the repair, maintenance, construction or reconstruction of highways.

SECTION 2. Section 49-15-17, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

49-15-17. (1) (a) All monies received or obtained by the commission under the provisions of this chapter shall be paid over by the commission to the State Treasurer and shall be deposited into the fund known as the "Seafood Fund." All revenues collected through the department, to include, but not limited to, commercial saltwater licenses and taxes, permits, fines and penalties, and confiscated catches, shall be deposited into the department operating account (Seafood Fund) and expended for the operation of the department, as authorized by the Legislature.

(b) There is established a special account to be known as the "Artificial Reef Program Account" within the seafood fund. Any funds received from any public or private source for the purpose of promoting, constructing, monitoring or maintaining artificial reefs in the marine waters of the state or in federal
waters adjacent to the marine waters of the state shall be
credited to the account. Any unexpended funds remaining in the
account at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the
seafood fund, but shall remain in the account. The department may
expend any funds in the account, subject to appropriation by the
Legislature, to accomplish the purpose of the account.

(c) There is established a special account to be known
as the "Coastal Preserve Account" within the seafood fund. Any
funds received from any public or private source for the purpose
of management, improvement and acquisition of coastal preserves in
the state and money required to be deposited pursuant to Section 1
of Senate Bill No. 2768, 2000 Regular Session shall be credited to
the account. Any unexpended funds remaining in the account at the
end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the seafood fund, but
shall remain in the account. The department may expend any funds
in the account, subject to appropriation by the Legislature, for
the management, improvement and acquisition of coastal preserves.

(2) The fund shall be treated as a special trust fund and
interest earned on the principal shall be credited to the fund.

(3) The secretary of the commission shall keep accurate
reports of monies handled as a part of the permanent records of
the commission, and the State Treasurer shall furnish the
secretary of the commission such forms as may be needed, and the
secretary shall account for such forms in his reports to the
treasurer.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2000.