

By: Senator(s) Hewes, Johnson (19th),
Gollott, Cuevas, Robertson, White (29th)

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 48

1 A RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND SECRETARY
2 GALE NORTON TO RECONSIDER THE RULE REGARDING PERSONAL WATERCRAFT
3 USE WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

4 WHEREAS, in September 1998, the National Park Service
5 proposed regulations that would prohibit personal watercraft (PWC)
6 use in units of the National Park System unless a determination
7 was made that such use is appropriate based on that unit's
8 enabling legislation, resources and values, other visitor uses and
9 overall management objectives; and

10 WHEREAS, this proposed rule was posted in the Federal
11 Register with a sixty-day comment period and the final rule was
12 adopted and became effective on April 20, 2000; and

13 WHEREAS, the final rule allowed for a two-year grace period
14 to evaluate the impact of personal watercraft use; and

15 WHEREAS, Superintendent Eubanks of the Gulf Islands National
16 Seashore has announced that, based upon the information currently
17 available, the Seashore intends to allow the regulation
18 prohibiting the use of personal watercraft within the boundaries
19 of the Seashore to go into effect on April 22, 2002; and

20 WHEREAS, continued access by personal watercraft owners and
21 their families in our national parks is extremely important and
22 clearly intended by the National Park Service rule; and

23 WHEREAS, personal watercraft owners and their families should
24 be allowed to enjoy the beautiful scenery and recreational
25 opportunities at our lakes and seashores regardless of whether
26 they choose to do so on a personal watercraft or other type of
27 boat; and

28 WHEREAS, access by personal watercraft to our national parks
29 is also vital to local economies and small businesses nationwide;
30 and

31 WHEREAS, some national parks are banning personal watercraft
32 outright without examining options to allow for their continued
33 use and without the open and transparent process envisioned by the
34 National Park Service rule; and

35 WHEREAS, owners of personal watercraft should not be
36 discriminated against and singled out on navigable waters where
37 motorized boating is allowed; and

38 WHEREAS, Mississippi's barrier islands are unique in the fact
39 that the mode of transportation used for access to the islands is
40 predominantly by watercraft and cannot be accessed by automobiles;
41 and

42 WHEREAS, the Legislature is deeply concerned about the
43 negative economic impact these unilateral bans on personal
44 watercraft will have on the State of Mississippi:

45 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
46 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby urge the Department of Interior and
47 Secretary Gale Norton to reconsider the rule regarding the use of
48 personal watercraft within the National Park System.

49 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
50 furnished to Secretary Gale Norton, Superintendent Eubanks of the
51 Gulf Islands National Seashore, and the Mississippi congressional
52 delegation.