

REPORT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MADAM PRESIDENT AND MR. SPEAKER:

We, the undersigned conferees, have had under consideration the amendments to the following entitled BILL:

S. B. No. 2525: Crabs; revise resident and nonresident commercial crabber licenses and fees.

We, therefore, respectfully submit the following report and recommendation:

1. That the House recede from its Amendment No. 1.
2. That the Senate and House adopt the following amendment:

Amend by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

12 SECTION 1. The following section shall be codified as

13 Section 49-15-92, Mississippi Code of 1972:

14 49-15-92. (1) Any person who feloniously steals, takes and
15 carries away crab traps or the property of another used to catch
16 saltwater crabs from crab traps is guilty of a misdemeanor, and on
17 conviction shall be fined Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) for the
18 first offense; Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) for the second
19 offense; and One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) for the third and
20 subsequent offenses or may be imprisoned in the county jail for a
21 term not to exceed ninety (90) days, or both fine and
22 imprisonment.

23 (2) This section shall not apply to any person who removes
24 crab traps that are illegally placed or in an illegal location.

25 This section shall not apply to any person who catches abandoned
26 crab traps in a shrimp trawl, keeps the crab traps aboard the
27 vessel and properly disposes of the crab traps.

28 SECTION 2. (1) It is unlawful for any person, firm or
29 corporation to engage in the commercial harvesting of crabs,
30 oysters, shrimp, bait shrimp or saltwater fish in marine waters
31 north of the CSX Railroad in Harrison and Hancock Counties except
32 for the taking of live bait shrimp as may be allowed by the
33 commission after the department conducts sampling studies.

34 (2) For a first offense, a violation of this section is
35 punishable by a fine of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00). For a
36 second violation and subsequent violations when such violations
37 are committed within three (3) years of the first offense, a
38 person shall be fined Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00).

39 SECTION 3. Section 49-15-86, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
40 amended as follows:

41 49-15-86. * * * Each person catching or taking any saltwater
42 crabs in the waters of the State of Mississippi for commercial
43 purposes shall obtain a license from the commission and shall pay
44 the following annual * * * license fees:

45 (a) Resident fee of Seventy Dollars (\$70.00) for each
46 boat; * * *

47 (b) Nonresident * * * fee of One Hundred Sixty Dollars
48 (\$160.00) for each boat * * *;

49 (c) At least one (1) person on each boat must have a
50 crab fishermen captain's license or be named as an alternate on
51 the captain's license. The resident captain's license fee is Five
52 Dollars (\$5.00). The nonresident captain's license fee is Forty
53 Dollars (\$40.00); and

54 (d) If applicable, the commission shall establish
55 reciprocal nonresident fees according to Section 49-15-30.

56 * * *

57 SECTION 4. Section 49-15-84, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
58 amended as follows:

59 49-15-84. (1) The commission shall coordinate with the Gulf
60 Coast Research Laboratory in the development of an ordinance for
61 the purpose of taking Callinectes sapidus (blue crab) or allied
62 species. The ordinance shall include provisions for the
63 establishment of size limits for individual or market use as well
64 as establishing legal harvest size for the cultivating of peeler
65 crabs and soft-shell crabs.

66 (2) The commission shall establish minimum specifications
67 for crab traps and shall require buoys of adequate size which are
68 identified as to the owner of the buoys and traps. Within the
69 bays and bayous recreational crabbers may use no more than six (6)
70 crab traps per household. All recreational crab traps shall be
71 attached to a fixed structure. The taking of crabs with drop nets
72 is permitted without a license.

73 (3) It is unlawful to catch, hold or have in possession any
74 female sponge crab or any female crab bearing visible eggs at any
75 time within marine waters. It is not unlawful to catch those
76 crabs unintentionally, if the crabs are immediately returned to
77 the water.

78 SECTION 5. Section 97-17-58, Mississippi Code of 1972, which
79 establishes penalties for theft of crab pots, is repealed.

80 SECTION 6. This act shall take effect and be in force from
81 and after July 1, 2001.

**Further, amend by striking the title in its entirety and
inserting in lieu thereof the following:**

1 AN ACT TO CREATE CODE SECTION 49-15-92, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
2 1972, TO PROVIDE PENALTIES FOR THE THEFT OF CRAB TRAPS; TO
3 PROHIBIT COMMERCIAL CRABBING NORTH OF THE CSX RAILROAD; TO PROVIDE
4 A PENALTY; TO AMEND SECTION 49-15-84, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
5 REQUIRE RECREATIONAL CRAB TRAPS TO BE ATTACHED TO A FIXED
6 STRUCTURE; TO REPEAL SECTION 97-17-58, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
7 WHICH ESTABLISHES PENALTIES FOR THEFT OF CRAB POTS; TO AMEND

8 SECTION 49-15-86, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE FOR THE
9 LICENSING OF INDIVIDUAL COMMERCIAL CRABBERS; TO DELETE FEE
10 AUTHORIZED FOR RECREATIONAL CRABBERS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

CONFEREES FOR THE SENATE

CONFEREES FOR THE HOUSE

X _____
Billy Hewes III

X _____
Jamie Creel

X _____
Tommy A. Gollott

X _____
Jim Ellington

X _____
T. O. Moffatt

X _____
Billy Broomfield