AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-15-313, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT A RESIDENT OR NONRESIDENT FRESHWATER OR SALTWATER FISHING LICENSE SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED FOR ANY PERSON WHO FISHES WITHIN A CERTAIN AREA SOUTH OF THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN SALT AND FRESH WATERS ESTABLISHED BY THE MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES AND THE COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 49-15-313, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

(1) Any resident between the ages of sixteen (16) and sixty-five (65) years, as defined in Section 49-7-3, fishing in the marine waters of the state, shall obtain a saltwater sports fishing license for a fee of Four Dollars ($4.00). This license shall be valid in any waters south of Interstate 10. Any resident citizen who is blind, paraplegic or a multiple amputee, or who has been adjudged by the Veterans Administration as having a total service-connected disability, or has been adjudged totally disabled by the Social Security Administration shall not be required to purchase or have in his possession a saltwater sports fishing license while engaged in such activities. Any resident exempt under this section shall have on his person while fishing proof of residency and age or disability.

(2) The commission shall prescribe the forms, types and fees for nonresident saltwater sports fishing licenses except that the fee for a nonresident saltwater sports fishing license shall not be less than Twenty Dollars ($20.00). The commission shall require a nonresident to purchase a nonresident freshwater fishing license.
license and a nonresident saltwater sports fishing license if the nonresident's state requires both licenses for a nonresident to fish in its marine waters.

(3) All resident vessels engaged in charter boat fishing, party boat fishing, head boat and guide boat fishing shall be issued a separate annual license by the commission at a fee of Two Hundred Dollars ($200.00). All nonresident vessels engaged in charter boat fishing, party boat fishing, headboat and guide boat fishing shall be issued a separate annual license by the commission. The commission shall set the fees for nonresident vessel licenses as provided in Section 49-15-30. Crew members and customers of the licensed vessels shall not be required to purchase an individual resident or nonresident saltwater fishing license while sponsored by the licensed vessels. An operator of a licensed vessel shall be required to report the number of customers to the department as required by the commission and the information shall be kept confidential and shall not be released, except to other fisheries management agencies or as statistical data. All nonresident vessels engaged in saltwater sport fishing tournaments, not to exceed an aggregate of twenty (20) days per calendar year, shall not be required to purchase an annual license as provided under this subsection.

(4) The saltwater sports fishing license is required for all recreational methods of finfish harvest.

(5) Any resident who purchases a lifetime sportsman's license, in accordance with Section 49-7-153, shall be entitled to fish in the marine salt waters of the state and shall be exempt from the purchase of a sport saltwater fishing license.

(6) Any person authorized to issue a license may collect and retain, for each saltwater fishing license issued, the additional fee authorized under Section 49-7-17.

(7) The fees collected from the sale of resident and nonresident saltwater sports fishing licenses shall be deposited
into the Seafood Fund and shall be used solely for the management
of marine resources.

(8) Participants in the Very Special Fishing Olympics are
exempt from this section.

(9) July 4 of each year is designated as "Free Saltwater
Sports Fishing Day." Any person may saltwater sport fish without
a license on the "Free Saltwater Sports Fishing Day."

(10) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section or any
other provisions of law to the contrary, a resident or nonresident
freshwater or saltwater fishing license shall not be required for
any person who fishes mainland beaches, piers, seawalls, bridges,
growings and waters where wading is common and practicable, within
an area south of the dividing line between salt and fresh waters
established under Section 49-15-23 by the Mississippi Commission
on Marine Resources and the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks and excluding the barrier islands.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2002.