HOUSE BILL NO. 1389

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 49-7-9 AND 49-15-313, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT ANY PERSON MAY FISH WITHOUT A LICENSE IN FRESHWATER OR SALTWATER ON EVERY FRIDAY OF EVERY WEEK, WHICH SHALL BE DESIGNATED AS "FREE FISHING FRIDAY"; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 49-7-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

49-7-9. (1) (a) Each resident of the State of Mississippi, as defined in Section 49-7-3, fishing in the public fresh waters of the state, including lakes and reservoirs, but not including privately owned ponds and streams, shall pay an annual license fee of Eight Dollars ($8.00). Any resident purchasing a public freshwater fishing license as prescribed in this subsection shall be entitled to fish, in accordance with the regulations and ordinances of the commission, in all public fresh waters within the territory of the State of Mississippi.

(b) A resident may purchase a resident fishing license valid for a period of three (3) days for the sum of Three Dollars ($3.00).

(c) No license shall be required of any resident citizen of the State of Mississippi who has not reached the age of sixteen (16) years or who has reached the age of sixty-five (65) years or who is blind, paraplegic, a multiple amputee or 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. Such person shall

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

By: Representatives Wells-Smith, Cameron, Davis, Ellington, Fillingane, Formby, Ishee, Lott, Snowden

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To: Game and Fish;

Universities and Colleges
not be required to purchase or have in his possession a hunting or
fishing license while engaged in such activities.

(d) A person exempt by reason of age, total
service-connected disability as adjudged by the Veterans
Administration or total disability as adjudged by the Social
Security Administration or who is blind, paraplegic or a multiple
amputee, shall have in their possession and on their person proof
of their age, residency, disability status or other respective
physical impairment while engaged in the activities of hunting or
fishing.

(2) Any person engaged in fishing for commercial purposes
and selling or peddling nongame gross fish at retail or selling or
shipping same at wholesale, as to markets, dealers or canning
plants, shall pay Thirty Dollars ($30.00) for a commercial fishing
license. Each piece of commercial fishing equipment must have a
commercial fishing equipment tag (at a cost of Three Dollars
($3.00) each) attached. A piece of commercial fishing equipment
is defined as: One (1) each hoop or barrel net; one thousand
(1,000) feet or less of trotline; one thousand (1,000) feet or
less of snagline; three thousand (3,000) feet or less of gill
netting; or three thousand (3,000) feet or less of trammel
netting. Netting of over three thousand (3,000) feet is
prohibited.

Upon payment of the Thirty Dollars ($30.00) license and tags
for use of hoop or barrel nets, the purchaser of the license is
hereby permitted to use lead nets thirty-five (35) yards in length
for each two (2) barrel nets used, but not to exceed seven (7)
lead nets.

(3) Each person taking nongame gross fish as defined in
Section 49-7-1, of any kind from the fresh waters of the state
shall be considered a producer and shall be entitled to sell his
own catch to anyone.
(4) Each person buying or handling non-game gross fish secured from commercial fishermen or others for the purpose of resale, whether handled on a commission basis or otherwise, and each resident person shipping non-game gross fish not his own catch out of the State of Mississippi shall be considered a wholesale dealer and shall pay a commercial fishing license in the sum of Thirty Dollars ($30.00) per annum. Nonresident wholesale dealers who buy non-game gross fish from fishermen or resident wholesale dealers for the purpose of resale shall obtain a nonresident commercial fishing license. Resident wholesale dealers licenses shall be issued only to persons who have been bona fide residents of the State of Mississippi for at least six (6) months. Any nonresident who brings non-game gross fish into the state from without the state for the purpose of resale to a wholesale or retail dealer or to the consumer shall obtain a nonresident commercial fishing license.

(5) Each resident buying non-game gross fish from a licensed wholesale dealer or licensed commercial fisherman for retail sale to the consumer only on rural or urban routes shall pay the sum of Thirty Dollars ($30.00) per annum for a commercial fishing license to do so.

(6) Each person engaged in the buying and selling of non-game gross fish as a wholesale dealer's agent, whether on a commission or salary basis, or otherwise, and not selling in the open market, or any vessel buying non-game gross fish to make up a cargo, shall pay a commercial fishing license in the sum of Thirty Dollars ($30.00) per annum and shall be responsible for any illegal transaction ensuing between the time he purchases from the fisherman and the time the fish are accepted by the wholesaler by whom he is employed.

(7) Any person using a wooden or plastic slat basket shall pay a fee of Thirty Dollars ($30.00) per basket per annum in addition to a commercial license. Slat baskets are defined as
commercial fishing devices used solely for the capture of catfish
and made entirely of wood and/or plastic slats in a boxlike or
cylindrical shape. Slat baskets shall not exceed six (6) feet in
length nor exceed fifteen (15) inches in width and height or
diameter, may have no more than two (2) throats, and must have at
least four (4) slot openings of a minimum one and one-half (1-1/2)
by twenty-four (24) inches evenly spaced around the sides of the
catch area. The one and one-half (1-1/2) inch wide slots must
begin at the rear of the basket and run twenty-four (24) inches
toward the throat end of the basket. Slat baskets may only be
fished in public waters of the State of Mississippi that are
opened to commercial fishing. Slat baskets shall be placed at
least one hundred (100) yards apart and may not be used with any
form of leads, netting or guiding devices. Each slat basket shall
have a metal slat basket tag attached to it with the tag number of
the owner imprinted on it. Such slat basket tags shall be
purchased from the department at a fee of Three Dollars ($3.00)
per tag. Any other identification of the owner of the basket
shall meet such specifications as set by the department. Slat
baskets may be fished statewide except where specifically
prohibited.

Any violation of the provisions of this subsection shall be a
Class I violation as prescribed in Section 49-7-141.

(8) It is unlawful for any person coming under the terms of
this section to offer for sale undersized nongame gross fish, as
set out and classified herein.

(9) All persons fishing in privately owned lakes or ponds
shall have specific permission to do so from the owner of such
lake or pond.

(10) The commission is authorized to issue nonresident
freshwater commercial fishing licenses to be sold by the
department and not by licensing agents. The commission shall
determine the fee and shall promulgate such rules and regulations
as it deems appropriate for issuance of nonresident freshwater commercial fishing licenses.

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

(12) Every Friday of each week of each year is designated as "Free Fishing Friday." Any person may sport fish without a license on "Free Fishing Friday."

(13) Any person authorized to issue any license under this section may collect and retain for issuing each license the additional fee authorized under Section 49-7-17.

SECTION 2. Section 49-15-313, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

49-15-313. (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 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) Every Friday of each week of each year is designated as
"Free Fishing Friday." Any person may saltwater sport fish
without a license on "Free Fishing Friday."

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2003.