

By: Senator(s) King

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2077

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 55-3-33, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 WAIVE THE PARK ENTRANCE FEE FOR PERSONS OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE OR
3 DISABLED; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 55-3-33, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
6 amended as follows:

7 55-3-33. (1) The Mississippi Department of Wildlife,
8 Fisheries and Parks shall have the power and authority, and it
9 shall be its duty to:

10 (a) Take charge and have full jurisdiction and control
11 over all state parks, which * * * shall be operated for the
12 purpose of providing outdoor recreational activities and enjoyment
13 for the citizens of the State of Mississippi and for the purpose
14 of attracting visitors to the state.

15 (b) Set up a uniform accounting procedure for the state
16 parks and prescribe the manner in which books, records and
17 accounts shall be kept. The procedure shall account for all
18 monies taken in and expended by the various parks and shall
19 provide for periodic audits of such books.

20 (c) Accept gifts, bequests of money or other property,
21 real or personal, to be used for the purpose of advancing the
22 recreation and conservation interests in state parks. The
23 department is authorized, subject to approval by the State
24 Legislature, to purchase property, real or personal, to be used
25 for state park purposes.

26 (d) Contract with the Mississippi Transportation
27 Commission, any municipality or board of supervisors of the state

28 for locating, constructing and maintaining roads and other
29 improvements in state parks and for payment of a part of the costs
30 thereof; however, no county or municipality more than twenty-five
31 (25) miles distant from a state park may contract for, or do, or
32 pay for any such work for a state park other than the
33 International Gardens of Mississippi. Any county or municipality
34 authorized to assist financially under * * * Sections 55-3-31
35 through 55-3-51 is authorized, in the discretion of its respective
36 governing authority, to set aside, appropriate and expend monies
37 from the General Fund for the purpose of defraying such expense
38 after a mandatory election is held on the question within the
39 county or municipality.

40 (e) Designate employees as peace officers with power to
41 make arrests for infraction of the rules and regulations of the
42 department. Such officers are authorized to carry weapons and to
43 enforce the laws of the State of Mississippi within the confines
44 of a state park.

45 (f) Enforce and delegate the responsibility to enforce
46 all reasonable rules and regulations governing the occupancy and
47 use of lands and waters in state parks under its jurisdiction,
48 supply recreational and conservation facilities and charge fees
49 for the use of same; review all rates and charges for facilities
50 and accommodations furnished at the various state parks annually,
51 making such charges as are justified; and establish fees for
52 entrance to state parks. Persons sixty-five (65) years of age or
53 older or disabled persons shall be exempt from entrance fees. The
54 park entrance fee for a car shall be waived if every person in the
55 car is sixty-five (65) years of age or older, or is disabled.

56 Each park shall retain from revenues generated therein, a sum
57 sufficient to pay necessary expenses of operation, but in no event
58 to be less than seventy-five percent (75%) of such revenues.

59 (2) The department shall have the authority to lease to any
60 entity, sell and convey or otherwise transfer to any county or

61 municipality, or close any state park or historical site within
62 its jurisdiction which received a General Fund subsidy in fiscal
63 year 1985 in excess of Two Dollars (\$2.00) per visitor to such
64 state park or historical site; provided, however, that this
65 authority shall not include the authority to sell, lease or convey
66 any park that was not in operation under the jurisdiction of the
67 department for a full fiscal year prior to fiscal year 1986.

68 (3) The department may execute agreements with
69 rails-to-trails and recreational districts by which the department
70 will assume responsibility for the operation and maintenance of
71 trails developed under Sections 55-25-1 through 55-25-15.

72 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
73 and after its passage.