

By: Senator(s) Harkins

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

SENATE BILL NO. 2575

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 ALLOW A LANDOWNER OR LEASEHOLDER OF PRIVATE LANDS TO USE WEAPON OF
3 CHOICE DURING CERTAIN PRIMITIVE WEAPON SEASONS; AND FOR RELATED
4 PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 49-7-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
7 amended as follows:

8 49-7-31. (1) The open season on deer shall be as follows:

9 (a) With bow and arrow: October 1 through the Friday
10 prior to Thanksgiving.

11 (b) With guns and with dogs: from the Saturday prior
12 to Thanksgiving through December 1.

13 (c) With primitive weapons and without dogs: December
14 2 through December 15.

15 (d) With guns and without dogs: December 16 through
16 December 23. However, the commission may allow hunting statewide
17 or in specific areas with any legal weapon which it may designate
18 without dogs after the end of the last season for hunting deer
19 with guns and with dogs, but the season with legal designated
20 weapons and without dogs shall not extend beyond January 31. In
21 any primitive weapon season after the last season for hunting deer
22 with guns and with dogs, a landowner or a leaseholder of private
23 lands may use the weapon of his choice.

24 (e) The commission shall establish an extended season
25 with primitive weapons and bow and arrow without dogs from
26 February 1 through February 15 for the area south of U.S. Highway
27 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35 only for legal bucks. Any
28 antlered deer taken in this area during any open season under this



29 section must be a legal buck as defined in this paragraph. For
30 purposes of this paragraph, the term "legal buck" means a deer
31 with antlers of four (4) points or more with a minimum inside
32 spread of ten (10) inches or a minimum main beam length of
33 thirteen (13) inches. The commission may regulate the taking of
34 deer with antlers of four (4) points or less under this paragraph
35 for the proper management of antlered deer. The commission may
36 delay the opening date and change the length of bow and arrow
37 season in subsection (1) (a) in this area.

38 (f) With guns and with dogs: December 24 through a
39 date fixed by the commission that will provide a total of
40 thirty-nine (39) days of hunting deer with guns and with dogs when
41 added to the number of days provided for hunting deer with guns
42 and with dogs in paragraph (b).

43 (2) The commission may set and regulate the deer seasons on
44 wildlife management areas which it administers.

45 (3) (a) The commission may allow the harvesting of
46 antlerless deer in the districts or zones upon the recommendation
47 of the executive director based upon good and substantial
48 quantitative data and research evaluations that demonstrate that
49 the harvesting is necessary to properly manage the herd.

50 (b) The commission, only upon the recommendation of the
51 executive director, may allow the harvesting of antlerless deer
52 during the deer season with guns and with dogs by a majority vote
53 of the commission.

54 (c) Nothing in this subsection prohibits the harvesting
55 of either-sex deer by landowners or leaseholders on private lands
56 under the deer management assistance program prescribed or
57 approved by the executive director.

58 (4) The commission may provide a special permit for the
59 harvesting of deer when they are depredating and destroying crops.
60 The department shall supervise the harvesting and provide for the



61 salvaging of the meat of the animals. The commission may
62 authorize the department to assist any farmer in this state, who
63 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem
64 wildlife.

65 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
66 and after July 1, 2012.

