

By: Representative Ladner

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

HOUSE BILL NO. 1284

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-4-4, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 EXPAND THE COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS TO NINE
3 MEMBERS; TO REQUIRE FOUR OF SUCH MEMBERS TO MEET CERTAIN EDUCATION
4 OR EXPERIENCE QUALIFICATIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 49-4-4, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
7 amended as follows:

8 49-4-4. (1) There is hereby created the Mississippi
9 Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, to be composed
10 of * * * nine (9) persons appointed by the Governor, with the
11 advice and consent of the Senate, for a term of five (5) years.
12 One (1) person shall be appointed from each congressional
13 district. The initial terms of the members shall be one (1), two
14 (2), three (3), four (4) and five (5) years, respectively.
15 Thereafter, all terms shall be for five (5) years. An appointment
16 to fill a vacancy which arises for reasons other than by
17 expiration of a term of office shall be made from the respective
18 congressional district for the unexpired term only. No member may



19 serve more than two (2) consecutive five (5) year terms on the
20 commission.

21 (2) The commission shall elect from its membership a
22 chairman who shall preside over meetings and a vice chairman who
23 shall preside in the absence of the chairman or when the chairman
24 shall be excused.

25 (3) The commission shall adopt rules and regulations
26 governing times and places for meetings and governing the manner
27 of conducting its business. Each member of the commission shall
28 take the oath prescribed by Section 268 of the Mississippi
29 Constitution, and shall enter into bond in the amount of Thirty
30 Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) to be approved by the Secretary of
31 State, conditioned according to law, and payable to the State of
32 Mississippi before assuming the duties of office. Any member who
33 shall not attend three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the
34 commission shall be subject to removal by a majority vote of the
35 commission members.

36 (4) The members of the commission shall receive no annual
37 salary but shall receive per diem compensation as authorized by
38 law for each day devoted to the discharge of official duties and
39 shall be entitled to reimbursement for all actual and necessary
40 expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties, including
41 mileage as authorized by law.

42 (5) * * * Five (5) members of the commission shall be
43 composed of persons with a demonstrated history of involvement in



44 at least one (1) of the matters of jurisdiction of the commission
45 and whose employment and activities are not in conflict. Four (4)
46 members of the commission shall be composed of members who either
47 hold a bachelor of science degree in either wildlife biology,
48 wildlife conservation, wildlife research, wildlife management, or
49 a related life sciences degree. Absent a bachelor's degree in one
50 of the above-named fields, a member may qualify by having at least
51 ten (10) years experience working with a company or companies
52 specializing in either wildlife biology, wildlife conservation,
53 wildlife research or wildlife management. All of the
54 commissioners shall be an active outdoorsman holding a resident
55 hunting or fishing license in at least * * * ten (10) years
56 preceding appointment. A member shall not have a record of
57 conviction of violation of fish or game laws and regulations
58 within * * * ten (10) years preceding appointment or a record of
59 any felony conviction, or a record of more than two (2) citations
60 for a violation of fish or game laws within the ten (10) years
61 preceding appointment.

62 (* * *6) The commission shall have the power to adopt,
63 amend and repeal such regulations and rules as may be necessary
64 for the operation of the department.

65 (* * *7) The commission shall have the power and authority
66 to issue all licenses and permits under the jurisdiction of the
67 department.



68 (* * *8) In the furtherance of its duties and
69 responsibilities, the commission may conduct hearings, gather
70 testimony and perform other functions required to carry out its
71 powers and duties as prescribed by statute.

72 (* * *9) The commission shall have all power for
73 conserving, managing and developing wildlife and fishery resources
74 in accordance with sound scientific principles, and in
75 collaboration with the agency staff of the Department of Wildlife,
76 Fisheries and Parks, except for saltwater aquatic life and marine
77 resources under the jurisdiction of the Mississippi Commission on
78 Marine Resources.

79 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
80 and after July 1, 2023.

