

By: Senator(s) Seymour

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

SENATE BILL NO. 2642

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-26, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
 2 REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS TO
 3 ESTABLISH A PHYSICAL TAGGING PROGRAM AND A REPORTING PROGRAM TO
 4 COLLECT HARVEST DATA AND MONITOR BAG LIMIT COMPLIANCE BY RESIDENT
 5 AND NONRESIDENT DEER HUNTERS; TO CLARIFY THAT THE AUTHORITY OF THE
 6 DEPARTMENT TO ESTABLISH A TAGGING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR TURKEY
 7 RELATES TO PHYSICAL TAGGING; TO REMOVE THE FEE THE DEPARTMENT WAS
 8 PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE FOR A TAGGING PROGRAM; TO SPECIFY
 9 CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR ANNUAL REPORTING TO THE LEGISLATURE; TO
 10 IMPOSE FINES AND AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE ON RESIDENTS IN VIOLATION
 11 OF THE DEER TAGGING AND HARVEST REPORTING PROGRAM; TO SPECIFY THAT
 12 ANY TAGGING PROGRAM SHALL REQUIRE THE PHYSICAL TAGGING OF THE MEAT
 13 OR, IN THE CASE OF DEER, ANTLERS PRIOR TO THE TRANSPORTATION OF
 14 THE ANIMAL; TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT TO CAUSE A MOBILE PHONE APP
 15 TO BE DEVELOPED ENABLING THE HUNTER TO PROVIDE TAGGING INFORMATION
 16 TO THE DEPARTMENT AT THE TIME OF TAGGING; TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT
 17 TO DEVELOP A SYSTEM FOR REPORTING UNUSED TAGS IN ORDER TO ALLOCATE
 18 THEM FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR; TO PROHIBIT TAXIDERMISTS AND WILD
 19 GAME PROCESSORS FROM ACCEPTING ANIMALS SUBJECT TO A TAGGING
 20 PROGRAM WITHOUT FIRST HAVING VERIFIED THAT THE ANIMALS HAVE BEEN
 21 TAGGED; TO PROVIDE THAT ANY TAGGING AND REPORTING PROGRAM
 22 ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE FUNDED BY LEGISLATIVE
 23 APPROPRIATION; TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT TO PROMULGATE RULES AND
 24 REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

26 **SECTION 1.** Section 49-7-26, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
 27 amended as follows:

28 49-7-26. (1) (a) The department * * * shall develop,
 29 implement and regulate a physical tagging and reporting program to



30 collect harvest data and monitor bag limit compliance by any means
31 as provided in this section.

32 * * *

33 (* * *b) For any tagging and reporting program
34 established under this section, the department shall provide * * *
35 a report to the Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Committees of the
36 Senate and the House of Representatives. The first such report
37 shall be submitted before July 1, 2026, and a report shall be
38 submitted annually thereafter. The report shall include
39 statistical information on harvest reporting violations for the
40 past year, except that the report due before July 1, 2026, shall
41 include such information for the past two (2) years.

42 (2) (a) The department * * * shall establish a physical
43 tagging and reporting program for deer harvested by nonresidents
44 and residents.

45 (b) (i) A nonresident who violates any law or
46 regulation of the nonresident deer tagging and harvest reporting
47 program shall be subject to the fine and forfeiture penalties
48 provided for a nonresident hunting without a license under Section
49 49-7-21. In addition, a nonresident shall be assessed the
50 administrative fee prescribed in this section.

51 (ii) A resident who violates any law or regulation
52 of the resident deer tagging and harvest reporting program shall
53 be guilty of a Class III violation and subject to the fines



54 provided in Section 49-7-101. In addition, a resident shall be
55 assessed the administrative fee prescribed in this section.

56 (3) (a) The department may establish a physical tagging and
57 reporting program for turkey.

58 (b) A person who violates any law or regulation of the
59 turkey tagging program is guilty of a Class III violation and
60 shall be subject to the fines provided in 49-7-101. In addition,
61 a person shall be assessed the administrative fee prescribed in
62 this section.

63 (4) Any tagging program established under this section shall
64 require the physical tagging of the meat or, in the case of deer,
65 antlers prior to the transportation of the animal. The department
66 shall cause a mobile phone app to be developed enabling the hunter
67 to provide tagging information to the department at the time of
68 tagging. The department shall develop a system for reporting
69 unused tags in order to allocate them for the following year.

70 (5) For any animal subject to a tagging program established
71 under this section, any taxidermist or wild game processor must
72 first verify that the animal has been tagged before accepting the
73 animal for professional services.

74 (* * *6) (a) A person convicted of a first violation of
75 the tagging program shall be assessed an administrative fee of not
76 less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) nor more than Five Hundred
77 Dollars (\$500.00), which shall be imposed and collected upon
78 conviction. A person convicted of a second or subsequent



79 violation shall be assessed an administrative fee of not less than
80 Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) nor more than One Thousand Dollars
81 (\$1,000.00), which shall be imposed and collected upon conviction.

82 (b) The clerk of the court shall collect and deposit
83 the administrative fees with the State Treasurer, in the same
84 manner and in accordance with the same procedure, as nearly as
85 practicable, as required for the collection and deposit of state
86 assessments under Section 99-19-73.

87 (c) The administrative fees shall be credited to the
88 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and may be expended by
89 the department upon appropriation by the Legislature.

90 (* * *7) Each deer or turkey taken or possessed in
91 violation of the tagging and harvest reporting program is a
92 separate offense.

93 (8) Any tagging and reporting program established under this
94 section shall be funded by legislative appropriation.

95 (9) The department is authorized to promulgate rules and
96 regulations in order to implement this section.

97 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
98 and after July 1, 2024.

