

By: Representative Boyd (19th)

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks; Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 757

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT RESIDENTS OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
2 WHO ARE SIXTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO
3 PAY ANY FEE OR CHARGE FOR ENTRY OR FOR FISHING AT ANY STATE PARK
4 OR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA; TO AMEND SECTION 55-3-33, MISSISSIPPI
5 CODE OF 1972, TO CONFORM TO THE PRECEDING PROVISION; AND FOR
6 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 **SECTION 1.** Any resident of the State of Mississippi who is
9 sixty-five (65) years of age or older shall not be required to pay
10 any fee or charge for entry or for fishing at any state park or
11 wildlife management area.

12 **SECTION 2.** Section 55-3-33, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
13 amended as follows:

14 55-3-33. (1) The Mississippi Department of Wildlife,
15 Fisheries and Parks may:

16 (a) Take charge and have full jurisdiction and control
17 over all state parks, which parks shall be operated for the
18 purpose of providing outdoor recreational activities and enjoyment
19 for the citizens of the State of Mississippi and for the purpose
20 of attracting visitors to the state.



21 (b) Set up a uniform accounting procedure for the state
22 parks and prescribe the manner in which books, records and
23 accounts shall be kept, which procedure shall account for all
24 monies taken in and expended by the various parks and shall
25 provide for periodic audits of such books.

26 (c) Accept gifts, bequests of money or other property,
27 real or personal, to be used for the purpose of advancing the
28 recreation and conservation interests in state parks. The
29 department is authorized, subject to approval by the State
30 Legislature, to purchase property, real or personal, to be used
31 for state park purposes.

32 (d) Contract with the State Transportation Commission,
33 any municipality or board of supervisors of the state for
34 locating, constructing and maintaining roads and other
35 improvements in state parks and for payment of a part of the costs
36 thereof; however, no county or municipality more than twenty-five
37 (25) miles distant from a state park may contract for, or do, or
38 pay for any such work for a state park other than the
39 International Gardens of Mississippi. Any county or municipality
40 authorized to assist financially under the provisions of Sections
41 55-3-31 through 55-3-51 is authorized, in the discretion of its
42 respective governing authority, to set aside, appropriate and
43 expend monies from the General Fund for the purpose of defraying
44 such expense after a mandatory election is held on the question
45 within the county or municipality.



46 (e) Designate employees as peace officers with power to
47 make arrests for infraction of the rules and regulations of the
48 department. Such officers are authorized to carry weapons and to
49 enforce the laws of the State of Mississippi within the confines
50 of a state park.

51 (f) Except as otherwise provided in Section 1 of this
52 act, enforce and delegate the responsibility to enforce all
53 reasonable rules and regulations governing the occupancy and use
54 of lands and waters in state parks under its jurisdiction, supply
55 recreational and conservation facilities and charge fees for the
56 use of same; review all rates and charges for facilities and
57 accommodations furnished at the various state parks annually,
58 making such charges as are justified; and establish fees for
59 entrance to state parks.

60 (g) To periodically establish a discounted fee or fees
61 for the entry and use of selected state parks and recreational
62 facilities. The discounted fee or fees shall only be used for the
63 purpose or purposes of marketing and promotion to increase the
64 patronage and revenue of those selected parks and facilities. The
65 discounted fee or fees shall not be considered a donation of state
66 property.

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



70 (2) The department shall have the authority to lease to any
71 entity, sell and convey or otherwise transfer to any county or
72 municipality, or close any state park or historical site within
73 its jurisdiction which received a general fund subsidy in fiscal
74 year 1985 in excess of Two Dollars (\$2.00) per visitor to such
75 state park or historical site; provided, however, that this
76 authority shall not include the authority to sell, lease or convey
77 any park that was not in operation under the jurisdiction of the
78 department for a full fiscal year prior to fiscal year 1986.

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

83 (4) (a) The department may contract with the electric
84 public utility with a certificate of public convenience and
85 necessity to serve the area where a state park is located for the
86 transfer of ownership of the electrical infrastructure in the
87 state park to that electric public utility.

88 (b) If the electric public utility enters into an
89 agreement for the operation and maintenance of electrical
90 facilities in a state park, the electric public utility may
91 perform any upgrades to the electrical infrastructure of the park
92 that are necessary for the electrical infrastructure to be in
93 compliance with the electric public utility standards. The
94 electric public utility may assess the costs of the upgrades to



the department upon the terms and conditions agreed to by the department and the electric public utility.

(c) The department may contract with the electric public utility with the certificate of public convenience and necessity to serve the area for the erection, construction, maintenance, operation and control of electric distribution substations, electric transmission lines, electrical appurtenances, electrical appliances or electrical equipment necessary or useful in the operation or distribution of electric power or energy in the state park.

(d) Any agreement entered into by the department and an electric public utility under this subsection is exempt from the public purchasing requirements under Section 31-7-13.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2025.

