

By: Representative Holloway (76th)

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and  
Parks

## HOUSE BILL NO. 826

1 AN ACT TO PROHIBIT USING DOGS FOR HUNTING DEER; TO AMEND  
2 SECTIONS 49-7-31 AND 49-7-37, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO CONFORM  
3 TO THE PRECEDING PROVISION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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

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

10 (b) With guns \* \* \*: from the Saturday prior to  
11 Thanksgiving through December 1, and from December 16 through a  
12 date fixed by the commission that will provide a total of  
13 thirty-nine (39) days of hunting deer with guns.

14 (c) With primitive weapons \* \* \*: December 2 through  
15 December 15.

16 \* \* \*

17 ( \* \* \*d) The commission shall establish an extended  
18 season with primitive weapons and bow and arrow \* \* \* from



19 February 1 through February 15 for the area south of U.S. Highway  
20 84 and east of Mississippi Highway 35 only for legal bucks. Any  
21 antlered deer taken in this area during any open season under this  
22 section must be a legal buck as defined in this paragraph. For  
23 purposes of this paragraph, the term "legal buck" means a deer  
24 with antlers of four (4) points or more with a minimum inside  
25 spread of ten (10) inches or a minimum main beam length of  
26 thirteen (13) inches. The commission may regulate the taking of  
27 deer with antlers of four (4) points or less under this paragraph  
28 for the proper management of antlered deer. The commission may  
29 delay the opening date and change the length of bow and arrow  
30 season in paragraph (a) in this area.

31 \* \* \*

32 When the open season on deer ends on a Friday, the commission  
33 shall have the authority to extend the season until thirty (30)  
34 minutes after sunset on the following Sunday.

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

37 (3) (a) The commission may allow the harvesting of  
38 antlerless deer in the districts or zones upon the recommendation  
39 of the executive director based upon good and substantial  
40 quantitative data and research evaluations that demonstrate that  
41 the harvesting is necessary to properly manage the herd.

42 (b) The commission, only upon the recommendation of the  
43 executive director, may allow the harvesting of antlerless deer



44 during the deer season with guns \* \* \* by a majority vote of the  
45 commission.

46 (c) Nothing in this subsection prohibits the harvesting  
47 of either-sex deer by landowners or leaseholders on private lands  
48 under the deer management assistance program prescribed or  
49 approved by the executive director.

50 (4) The commission may provide a special permit for the  
51 harvesting of deer when they are depredating and destroying crops.  
52 The department shall supervise the harvesting and provide for the  
53 salvaging of the meat of the animals. The commission may  
54 authorize the department to assist any farmer in this state, who  
55 sustains crop damage by wildlife, in eradication of the problem  
56 wildlife.

57 (5) (a) During any open season on deer with primitive  
58 weapons after November 30, a person may use any legal weapon of  
59 choice on private lands only, if the person is:

60 (i) The title owner of the land;  
61 (ii) The lessee of the hunting rights on the land;  
62 (iii) A member of a hunting club leasing the  
63 hunting rights on the land; or

64 (iv) A guest of a person specified in subparagraph  
65 (i), (ii) or (iii).

66 (b) If the person is required to have a hunting  
67 license, the person must have a primitive weapon license,  
68 Sportsman's License or a Lifetime Sportsman's License.



(6) The commission shall establish and regulate special hunts during velvet hunting season, outside of the regular open season on deer, as provided in Section 49-7-31.6.

**SECTION 2.** Section 49-7-37, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

49-7-37. (1) Any resident of this state licensed to hunt or otherwise take any legal game bird or game animal in this state by or with the use of firearms, may hunt, kill, shoot or otherwise take game animals or game birds by the use of falcons or hawks as may be prescribed by the commission and in compliance with federal guidelines.

(2) (a) The commission may extend the special archery seasons on any public hunting projects, game refuges or prescribed areas having surplus deer populations.

(b) The commission may declare a special season in any area of the state where the need to collect samples for testing for chronic wasting disease (CWD) is indicated. Special seasons for collecting CWD testing samples may be set within the open season or, if necessary, outside the open season. Lawful weapons for hunting during any special CWD sample collection season shall be consistent with the then-current open season or, if outside the open season, as directed by order of the commission.

(3) The killing by primitive firearms of an antlerless deer or any other deer protected during the regular deer season is



93 prohibited, but the commission may designate areas of the state in  
94 which the killing of antlerless deer may be permitted or limited.

95 (4) The commission may make reasonable rules and regulations  
96 concerning the special seasons with falcons and hawks, bow and  
97 arrow, primitive firearms, air guns, air bows and pre-charged  
98 pneumatic weapons which it deems necessary and proper. The  
99 commission shall define the terms "primitive firearm," "air gun,"  
100 "air bow" and "pre-charged pneumatic weapon" for purposes of this  
101 section and other law or regulation.

102 (5) Air guns shall be lawful for hunting small game during  
103 the seasons for hunting small game. Air bows and pre-charged  
104 pneumatic weapons shall be lawful for hunting large game, except  
105 game birds, turkeys and migratory waterfowl. Air bows and  
106 pre-charged pneumatic weapons may be used during any open season  
107 on deer with primitive weapons after November 30, on private lands  
108 only, consistent with the requirements of Section 49-7-31(5)(a).

109 \* \* \*

110 ( \* \* \*6) In addition to a hunting license allowing the  
111 taking of deer, any resident desiring to hunt deer with bow and  
112 arrow or primitive firearm during primitive weapon or archery  
113 season or special hunts established by the commission shall  
114 purchase a special resident archery and/or primitive firearms  
115 license at a fee of Fourteen Dollars (\$14.00) for each license  
116 plus the fee provided in Section 49-7-17.



117 ( \* \* \*7) Any person violating this section is guilty of a  
118 Class II violation and shall be punished as provided in Section  
119 49-7-143.

120 ( \* \* \*8) All seasons provided for herein shall begin on  
121 Saturday.

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

