

By: Representative McBride

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and  
Parks

HOUSE BILL NO. 978

1 AN ACT TO PROTECT THE HUNTING LANDS OF MISSISSIPPI; TO ENSURE  
2 THAT LAND WILL ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE TO THE CITIZENS OF MISSISSIPPI  
3 FOR PURPOSES OF HUNTING; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** (1) Subject to existing rights, lands managed by  
6 the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall be open to  
7 access and use for recreational hunting except as limited by the  
8 commission for reasons of public safety, homeland security, or as  
9 otherwise limited by law.

10 (2) The commission shall exercise its authority to manage  
11 lands in a manner to support, promote and enhance recreational  
12 hunting opportunities to the extent authorized by law.

13 (3) The commission is not required to give preference to  
14 hunting over other uses or priorities established by state law.

15 (4) To the greatest practicable extent, commission land  
16 management decisions and actions may not result in any net loss of  
17 any acreage available for hunting opportunities that exists on  
18 July 1, 2006.

19 (5) Before January 1 of each year, the commission shall  
20 submit to the chairmen of the respective wildlife committees in  
21 each house a written report containing:

22 (a) The acreage managed by the commission that has been  
23 closed to recreational hunting during the previous year and the  
24 reasons for the closures; and

25 (b) The acreage managed by the commission that was  
26 opened to recreational hunting to compensate for the acreage that  
27 was closed during the previous year.

28           **SECTION 2.** Section 1 of this act shall be codified within  
29 Title 49, Chapter 5, Mississippi Code of 1972.

30           **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
31 and after July 1, 2006.