

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4104

To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize funding to carry out certain water quality and barrier island restoration projects for the Mississippi Sound, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 28, 2000

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize funding to carry out certain water quality and barrier island restoration projects for the Mississippi Sound, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Mississippi Sound Res-
5 toration Act of 2000”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

1 (1) the Mississippi Sound provides a diverse en-
2 vironment that provides the diverse essential habitat
3 that supports numerous species of fish, birds, mam-
4 mals, and plants;

5 (2) the Sound supports an extensive and suc-
6 cessful seafood industry that is important to the re-
7 gion's economy and way of life;

8 (3) the unique natural resources of the Sound
9 provides the community with extensive recreational
10 opportunities adding to the quality of life and con-
11 tributing to the local economy;

12 (4) the Sound encompasses an area of approxi-
13 mately 2,400 square miles;

14 (5) the barrier islands system is in need of res-
15 toration to serve as wildlife habitat and to provide
16 mainland protection from coastal erosion;

17 (6) increasing population growth and rapid de-
18 velopment combined with intensive land use have re-
19 >sulted in dramatic threats to the environment and
20 ecology of the Sound;

21 (7) a major source of pollution in the Sound is
22 raw or partially treated human waste from—

23 (A) communities with poor sewer systems
24 or without sewer systems; and

1 (B) septic tank systems that are not oper-
2 ating properly;

3 (8) such pollution has a negative impact on the
4 seafood industry through occasional closings of oys-
5 ter banks;

6 (9) the tourism industry is adversely affected
7 from beach closings due to storm runoff containing
8 untreated human waste; and

9 (10) the programs and activities of the various
10 Federal agencies involved with administration of
11 laws, programs, and assets that affect the water
12 quality of the Sound, including the Environmental
13 Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers,
14 and other agencies, lack coordination and sufficient
15 resources to measure and remediate water quality
16 problems in the Sound.

17 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

18 (1) to coordinate the restoration efforts of Fed-
19 eral, State, and local agencies and nonregulatory or-
20 ganizations in the restoration of the Mississippi
21 Sound;

22 (2) to establish the Mississippi Sound Restora-
23 tion Program within the Environmental Protection
24 Agency; and

1 (3) to authorize and provide adequate resources
2 for restoration projects in the Sound.

3 **SEC. 3. MISSISSIPPI SOUND.**

4 Title I of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
5 (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
6 the following:

7 **“SEC. 121. MISSISSIPPI SOUND.**

8 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following
9 definitions apply:

10 “(1) SOUND.—The term ‘Sound’ means the
11 Mississippi Sound located on the Gulf Coast of the
12 State of Mississippi.

13 “(2) COUNCIL.—The term ‘Council’ means the
14 Mississippi Sound Executive Council established
15 under subsection (b)(3)(A).

16 “(3) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—The term ‘manage-
17 ment plan’ means the sound management plan de-
18 veloped under subsection (b)(3)(B).

19 “(4) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means
20 the Mississippi Sound Restoration Program estab-
21 lished under subsection (b)(1).

22 “(b) MISSISSIPPI SOUND RESTORATION PROGRAM.—

23 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180
24 days after the date of enactment of this section, the
25 Administrator shall establish within the Environ-

1 mental Protection Agency the Mississippi Sound
2 Restoration Program.

3 “(2) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the program
4 shall be—

5 “(A) to coordinate efforts among and pro-
6 vide resources for Federal, State, and local gov-
7 ernmental agencies and nonregulatory organiza-
8 tions to reduce pollution and restore barrier is-
9 lands in the Sound; and

10 “(B) to restore the ecological health of the
11 Sound.

12 “(3) ADMINISTRATION.—

13 “(A) MISSISSIPPI SOUND EXECUTIVE
14 COUNCIL.—Not later than 180 days after the
15 date of enactment of this section, the Adminis-
16 trator shall establish the Mississippi Sound Ex-
17 ecutive Council, to be composed of the following
18 individuals (or their designees):

19 “(i) The Administrator.

20 “(ii) The Governor of the State of
21 Mississippi.

22 “(iii) One representative from each of
23 Hancock County, Harrison County, and
24 Jackson County, Mississippi, designated by
25 the board of supervisors of the County.

1 “(iv) The director of the Gulf Coast
2 Research Lab located in Ocean Springs,
3 Mississippi, or the designee of the director.

4 “(v) The Director of the Mississippi
5 Department of Marine Resources or the
6 designee of the Director.

7 “(B) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

8 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than
9 180 days after the date of enactment of
10 this section, the Administrator, in coopera-
11 tion with appropriate Federal, State, and
12 local authorities, shall assist the Council in
13 developing a comprehensive, multiuse,
14 management plan for the restoration and
15 protection of the Sound.

16 “(ii) ASSISTANCE.—Assistance pro-
17 vided by the Administrator under subpara-
18 graph (A) shall include grants for and
19 technical assistance in—

20 “(I) developing an annual work
21 plan endorsed by the Council;

22 “(II) supporting Sound-wide en-
23 vironmental monitoring and research
24 to provide technical and scientific in-

1 formation necessary to support man-
2 agement decisions;

3 “**(III)** developing a comprehen-
4 sive research plan to address the tech-
5 nical needs of the program; and

6 “**(IV)** recommending restoration
7 projects for implementation by the
8 State of Mississippi, counties, and
9 nongovernmental entities.

10 “**(c) RESTORATION PROJECTS.**—In accordance with
11 the management plan, the Administrator shall provide
12 funding and oversight to carry out voluntary restoration
13 projects for the Sound that—

14 “(1) address human waste problems in the
15 Sound by providing a cost-sharing construction and
16 education program that offers incentives to counties
17 and local communities to improve sewage treatment
18 facilities;

19 “(2) provide for the rerouting of discharges
20 from pumping stations through adjacent wetlands,
21 using existing canals and small water control struc-
22 tures, in order to use natural wetland to filter pol-
23 lutants from urban stormwater;

1 “(3) improve Sound water quality by estab-
2 lishing new sanitation and sewage systems where
3 needed;

4 “(4) reverse the trend of decreasing acreage of
5 barrier islands and coastal wetlands in the Sound by
6 creating new sustainable wetland habitat and restor-
7 ing barrier islands through the beneficial use of
8 dredged material;

9 “(5) retain the integrity of natural structural
10 elements in the coastal landscape, such as ridges
11 and barrier islands, in order to reduce storm surge
12 impacts to essential habitats and human infrastruc-
13 ture; and

14 “(6) restore and enhance the sustainable yield
15 of fin and shellfish by the re-creation and enhance-
16 ment of keys and reefs and enhancement of keys and
17 reefs that have been destroyed as a result of human
18 or natural activity.

19 “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
20 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are nec-
21 essary to carry out subsections (b) and (c). Such funds
22 shall remain available until expended.”.

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