



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Secretary of State Returns More Than \$9.7 Million to Gulf Coast from Tidelands Leases and New Assessment Collections

BILOXI, Miss. – Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann presented a check for \$9,707,662 to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) at a ceremony held Dec. 1, 2011, at the Secretary of State's Office in Gulfport--the largest tidelands amount ever returned to the Gulf Coast to date.

"The tidelands check is a crucial component of preserving the culture of the Mississippi Gulf Coast," said Hosemann. "The Mississippi State Legislature and the Secretary of State's Office are committed to maximizing the benefit of our state-owned lands and the preservation of our coastal areas. This \$9,707,662 is an integral part of ensuring that goal."

"These Tidelands funds are critical to the cities, counties, NGOs and others along the Mississippi Gulf Coast," said MDMR Executive Director Bill Walker. "These funds provide for access projects that allow our citizens and visitors to better enjoy our marine resources and waters. These funds provide for research and academic programs that better inform our public about the value of our marine resources to the Gulf Coast and to Mississippi as a whole. These funds allow us in certain instances to provide indirect assistance to tourism and economic development, to directly assist in environmental conservation, and to leverage federal funds. The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources looks forward to working with the Secretary of State and the Mississippi Legislature to continue to use these funds to the betterment of the environment, economy, and quality of life along the Mississippi Gulf Coast."

The tidelands lease revenue was collected on leases on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2011. The Tidelands Assessment revenue is a result of House Bill 44, passed in the 2005 Fifth Extraordinary Session. That bill allowed land-based casinos on the Coast and required them to pay a tidelands assessment, which is based on a casino's capital investment.

As Secretary of State, Hosemann negotiates tidelands leases on behalf of the state. Traditionally, the Mississippi Legislature appropriates the lease revenue for specific projects. Rent is collected from tidelands leaseholders by the Secretary of State and then returned to the MDMR at the end of the fiscal year.

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The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the MDMR online at dmr.ms.gov.



PHOTO CREDIT: Photo courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

PHOTO CAPTION: The Mississippi Secretary of State's Office presented a Tidelands check for \$9,707,662 million to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) on Dec. 1, 2011. Pictured are (from left to right): MDMR Executive Director Bill Walker, state Rep. Richard Bennett, state Sen. Tommy Gollott, state Rep. John Read, state Rep. Sonya Williams-Barnes, state Rep. Greg Haney, state Rep. Billy Broomfield, Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann, state Rep. Timmy Ladner, state Rep. Randall Patterson, state Rep. Casey Eure, state Rep. Carolyn Crawford, state Rep. Charles Busby and state Rep. Sean Tindell.

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