



State of Mississippi

TATE REEVES
Governor

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

CHRIS WELLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 28, 2025

Mr. Travis Williams
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Artificial Reef Bureau
1141 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Dear Mr. Williams:

Re: Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Inshore Artificial Reefs
COE No. SAM201701110KMN
WQC No. WQC2018056

Pursuant to Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U. S. C. 1251, 1341), the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) issues this Certification, after public notice and opportunity for public hearing, to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, an applicant for a Federal License or permit to conduct the following activity:

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources: Project for placement of reef materials to enhance and fortify 63 existing inshore artificial reefs. Each existing inshore artificial reef is located within an approximately 10-acre site for a total of 630 acres and submerged in approximately 4-8 feet MLLW of Mississippi waters throughout the three coastal counties. Relief of artificial reef materials deployed on the sea floor shall be less than 6 vertical inches. Artificial Reef material would consist of crushed concrete, oyster shells, or limestone. Artificial Reef material would be placed only within the existing footprint of each artificial reef. Deployment vessels (loaded) shall draw no more than one (1) foot less than the depth of the water column in which the cultch material would be deployed. The applicant stated that these artificial reefs have been depleted due to a multitude of adverse effects, stemming from natural causes such as subsidence. The replenishment of these artificial reefs is

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expected to create and enhance valuable near shore artificial reef habitat that would support and sustain healthy populations of various species of larvae and sessile epifauna and infauna (invertebrates and vertebrates). [SAM201701110KMN, WQC2018056].

MDEQ certifies that the above-described activity will be in compliance with the applicable provisions of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act and Section 49-17-29 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, if the applicant complies with the following conditions:

1. Material shall be clean and non-polluting, free of trash, debris, asphalt, etc. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R.2.2.A.(3))
2. Turbidity outside the limits of a 750-foot mixing zone shall not exceed the ambient turbidity by more than 50 Nephelometric Turbidity Units. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R.2.2.A.(3))
3. No sewage, oil, refuse, or other pollutants shall be discharged into the watercourse. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 2.2.A.(3))

As part of the Scope of Review for Application Decisions, 11 Mississippi Administrative Code Part 6, Rule 1.3.4(B), the above conditions are necessary for MDEQ to ensure that appropriate measures will be taken to eliminate unreasonable degradation and irreparable harm to waters of the State, such that the activity will not meet the criteria for denial:

- (A) The proposed activity permanently alters the aquatic ecosystem such that water quality criteria are violated and/or it no longer supports its existing or classified uses. An example is the channelization of streams.
- (B) There is a feasible alternative to the activity which reduces adverse consequences on water quality and classified or existing uses of waters of the State.
- (C) The proposed activity adversely impacts waters containing State or federally recognized threatened or endangered species.
- (D) The proposed activity adversely impacts a special or unique aquatic habitat, such as National or State Wild and Scenic Rivers and/or State Outstanding Resource Waters.
- (E) The proposed activity in conjunction with other activities may result in adverse cumulative impacts.
- (F) Nonpoint source/storm water management practices necessary to protect water quality have not been proposed.

(G) Denial of wastewater permits and/or approvals by the State with regard to the proposed activities.

(H) The proposed activity results in significant environmental impacts which may adversely impact water quality.

MDEQ also certifies that there are no limitations under Section 302 nor standards under Sections 306 and 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act which are applicable to the applicant's above-described activity.

This certification is valid for the project as proposed. Any deviations without proper modifications and/or approvals may result in a violation of the 401 Water Quality Certification. If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Barefoot.

Sincerely,



Becky Simonson
Chief, Environmental Permits Division

BS:cb:po

cc: Kaaren Neumann, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District
Willa Brantley, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Jamie Becker, Environmental Protection Agency