

# Southern Skin Diver Supply



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The Oldest in the South

To: All Interested Parties

October 14, 1999

I kept hoping somebody else would tackle the State of Alabama about a new law that was passed this year in the state legislature. However, it doesn't look like anyone else has, so I guess I have to try.

This Spring, the State of Alabama passed the Alabama Underwater Cultural Resources Act. This was not well thought out and is wrong. It is a severe intrusion into our individual rights. Being a Southerner and from Alabama, I don't like being put upon by others, especially by my own state. In effect, what this act has done is to claim for the state everything over 50 years old that is in any Alabama waters, including rivers, lakes and creeks. This does not just apply to shipwrecks, which are already claimed under Federal law. Instead, this pertains to everything that is underwater.

State employees are not qualified, nor do they have any intention of recovering lost, abandoned, or thrown away items that need to be rescued, recovered, and preserved by individuals who have an interest in them. The State of Alabama currently has more relics and artifacts than it can ever hope to display. These items are constantly deteriorating and need to be preserved. The State is presently borrowing money with a bond issue to expand the Department of Archives and History. This is just so they can display, and try to keep from further deterioration, what they already have. When they passed this act, they asked for no one's opinion. They did not ask any dive store, any relic hunter, or any collector for their opinion. Instead, the act was passed based on a request from bureaucrats in Montgomery and other well-intentioned, but poorly informed, people in Mobile.

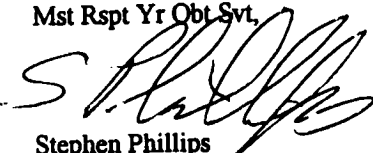
I've heard other people say that this act has already been passed in other states as well. However, I believe they are mistaken and are confusing this act with the federal shipwreck law. Other states do not have an act that claims everything underwater.

I don't know what to do next. I do know that everyone who is interested and think this act is wrong needs to contact the state legislature and the acting director of the Alabama State Historical Commission, Elizabeth Brown. She can be reached as 468 S. Perry St., Montgomery, AL 36130.

I suspect this act will be tested in court and found to be unconstitutional. The problem is that court is expensive and bureaucrats are doing things to us because they know court is too expensive for individuals. However, if enough people draw attention to this wrong, then the state legislature might back-track and get rid of this mistake. I have attached copies of this new act and copies of letters that I have already sent to Elizabeth Brown at the State Historical Commission.

We need to all get involved in having this act repealed. It is a real bad law. I appreciate your help in this matter.

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