



STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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June 23, 2000

Honorable Chris Pringle
Representative, District 101
Alabama House of Representatives
Post Office Box 8342
Mobile, Alabama 36689

Dear Representative Pringle:

I regret being so delayed in response to your letter addressed to Elizabeth Brown regarding the Underwater Cultural Resources Act.

We are now in the process of drafting regulations required to complete the law-making process which began in the 1999 legislative session and resulted in the passage of HB 390. In this process we have sought the advice of a diverse group of persons, including the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Maritime Advisory Council, and the National Park Service. We have received testimony from sport divers (written and oral) and have invited Mr. Steve Phillips to attend one of our working meetings. We anticipate that this process will be complete by the end of the summer and we will proceed to a public hearing rapidly after that.

Our sole object in this procedure is to follow the legislative direction to "prohibit the taking or damaging of those [cultural] resources, intentionally and knowingly without a contract or permit." The legislature defined our program narrowly and we have been pleased to note those limits: the statute limits our responsibility and authority to submerged lands belonging to the state or those that are within the jurisdiction of the state and to resources that are more than fifty years old. We understand—and agree—that sport divers also have an interest in those areas we are charged to protect and we are committed to finding new and constructive ways of working with this important recreational component.

I would be pleased to have any thoughts you might have regarding this program.

Sincerely,

Lee H. Warner

cc: Mr. Steve Phillips