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## DIGEST

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HB 858 Original

2018 Regular Session

Hunter

**Abstract:** Provides for referendum elections necessary to authorize and conduct riverboat gaming operations on a portion of the Ouachita River lying within the boundary of the Southside Economic Development District for the City of Monroe.

Present law provides that the conducting of gaming activities on a riverboat is authorized only upon certain rivers or waterways designated by law. Present law provides that such designated rivers and waterways shall include those portions of the Mississippi, Red, except the portion of the Red River within the borders of Rapides Parish, Calcasieu, Mermentau, or Atchafalaya Rivers and Bayou Segnette within the city limits of Westwego, the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, Bayou Bienvenue, Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Maurepas, Lake Charles, the Intracoastal Waterway, except the portion thereof within the borders of Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, and the Sabine River north of the Toledo Bend Reservoir Dam.

Present law provides that the addition of a designated river or waterway to those listed in present law shall be effective only after approval by voters in an election held in any parish which borders the proposed river's or waterway's banks.

At any time after the inclusion of a river or waterway has been proposed by an act of the legislature, present law authorizes the governing authority of any parish which borders the proposed river's or waterway's banks to order, by resolution, an election to permit voters in such parish to decide the question of whether the berthing of a riverboat upon which gaming is conducted on such river or waterway shall be authorized.

Present law provides that if such an election occurs in any parish which borders the banks of a proposed river or waterway and the measure is approved by the voters, then upon promulgation of the election results in any such parish, the river or waterway proposed by an act of the legislature shall be considered a designated river or waterway.

Present law authorizes the governing authority of the parish or municipality in which the licensed berth of a riverboat is located to levy an admission fee of up to \$2.50 for each passenger boarding or embarking upon the riverboat.

Proposed law retains present law and provides as follows:

- (1) Adds the portion of the Ouachita River lying within the boundary of the Southside Economic Development District for the City of Monroe as defined by present law to the list of

designated rivers and waterways.

- (2) Provides that the governing authority of Ouachita Parish, by resolution, may call a referendum election to consider the following propositions:
  - (a) Whether to allow riverboat gaming operations or activities to be conducted in Ouachita Parish as required by present constitution (La. Const. Art. XII, §6(C)(1)(b)).
  - (b) Whether that portion of the Ouachita River lying within the boundary of the Southside Economic Development District for the City of Monroe, all within Ouachita Parish, shall be added to the list of designated rivers or waterways set forth in present law, for the purpose of authorizing the berthing of a riverboat upon which gaming is conducted on that river or waterway, as required by present law (R.S. 27:43(B)(1)).
- (3) If these propositions are approved, then any riverboat gaming licensee desiring to conduct riverboat gaming operations or activities at the specified berth or docking facility in Ouachita Parish on the approved portion of the Ouachita River shall apply to the La. Gaming Control Board for authorization to conduct riverboat gaming operations or activities at that berth or docking facility, subject to the outcome of another referendum election.
- (4) If the La. Gaming Control Board authorizes one or more riverboat gaming licensees pursuant to the provisions of proposed law, the governing authority of Ouachita Parish, by resolution, shall call a referendum election to consider a proposition on whether a specified riverboat gaming licensee shall be allowed to conduct riverboat gaming operations or activities at a specified berth or docking facility in Ouachita Parish, as required by present constitution (La. Const. Art. XII, §6(C)(2)).
- (5) Except as otherwise provided by proposed law, all elections provided for by the provisions of proposed law shall be conducted as provided in the present law election code including but not limited to those provisions providing for the responsibility of the parish governing authority to provide notice to the public as provided by law.
- (6) Provides that the elections shall be held in Ouachita Parish on an appropriate date as specified in the election code, to be selected by the governing authority of Ouachita Parish.
- (7) Provides that if the elections authorized by the provisions of proposed law are held and if the propositions authorized by those provisions are approved by a majority of the electors voting thereon, then the proceeds from any admission fee charged by the local governing authority of Ouachita Parish shall be disbursed in certain percentages to the following entities: the Ouachita Parish School Board, the Monroe City School Board, the University of Louisiana at Monroe, the Louisiana Delta Community College in Ouachita Parish, the police department of the city of Monroe, the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Department, the police department for the town of Richwood, the Southside Economic Development District for the City of Monroe, the governing authority of the city of Monroe, and the governing authority

of Ouachita Parish.

- (8) Defines "riverboat gaming licensee" as the holder of a license to conduct riverboat gaming operations or activities issued by the La. Gaming Control Board pursuant to the provisions of present law.

(Amends R.S. 27:43(B)(1); Adds R.S. 18:1300.24 and 1300.25 and R.S. 27:93(A)(12))