

By: Representatives Read, Bounds, Arnold,
Cockerham, Eure, Hale, Mangold, Oliver,
Turner, Young

To: Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1617
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE SUPPORT AND
2 MAINTENANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS FOR
3 THE FISCAL YEAR 2024.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

5 **SECTION 1.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
6 necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the State General
7 Fund not otherwise appropriated, for the support and maintenance
8 of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks for the fiscal
9 year beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024.....
10\$ 9,882,374.00.

11 **SECTION 2.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
12 necessary, is appropriated out of any money in any special fund in
13 the State Treasury to the credit of the Department of Wildlife,
14 Fisheries and Parks which is comprised of special source funds
15 collected by or otherwise available to the department for the
16 support and maintenance of the department, including the Museum of
17 Natural Science and the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, for the
18 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024.....



19\$ 91,192,538.00.

20 The following sum, which is included in the sum appropriated
21 above in this section, is appropriated out of the state excise
22 taxes upon gasoline, oil and other petroleum products to the
23 Fisheries and Wildlife Fund for the fiscal year beginning
24 July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024.....\$ 5,750,000.00.

25 The Department of Revenue is directed to set aside the amount
26 of this appropriation or any part thereof at any time it sees fit,
27 out of any collections of taxes upon gasoline, oil and other
28 petroleum products, and to deduct the amounts so set aside from
29 such funds before making distribution thereof. However,
30 provisions shall first be made for the Highway Bonds Sinking Fund,
31 as required under the provisions of Chapter 130, Laws of 1938, and
32 any amendments thereto, and Section 27-5-101, Mississippi Code of
33 1972.

34 Any funds available in the Wildlife Heritage Fund may be
35 expended by the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks as
36 authorized by law. The department shall make a detailed report to
37 the Legislature regarding the spending of the Wildlife Heritage
38 funds by September 1 for the preceding fiscal year.

39 **SECTION 3.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
40 Section 2 to the Bureau of Wildlife and Fisheries, funds in the
41 amount of One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Three Hundred
42 Thirty-five Dollars (\$125,335.00) shall be derived from the
43 Education Enhancement Fund deposited pursuant to Sections 27-65-75



44 and 27-67-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, for the purpose of
45 defraying the expenses of Project WILD for Fiscal Year 2024.

46 **SECTION 4.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
47 this act, the following positions are authorized:

48 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

49 Permanent: 533

50 Time-Limited: 51

51 With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's
52 responsibility to make certain that funds required for Personal
53 Services for Fiscal Year 2025 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2024 funds
54 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are
55 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2024 budget by the Mississippi
56 Legislature. The Legislature shall determine the agency's
57 personal services appropriation, which the State Personnel Board
58 shall publish. The agency's personal services appropriation may
59 consist of restricted funds for approved vacancies for Fiscal Year
60 2024 that may not be utilized for active Fiscal Year 2023
61 Headcount. It shall be the agency's responsibility to ensure that
62 the funds provided for vacancies are used to increase headcount
63 and not for promotions, title changes, in-range salary adjustments
64 or any other mechanism for increasing salaries for current
65 employees. It is the Legislature's intention that no employee
66 salary falls below the minimum salary established by the
67 Mississippi State Personnel Board.



68 Additionally, the State Personnel Board shall determine and
69 publish the projected annualized payroll costs based on current
70 employees. It shall be the responsibility of the agency head to
71 ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2024 do
72 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If
73 the agency's Fiscal Year 2024 projected cost exceeds the
74 annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the
75 State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be
76 essential for the agency.

77 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with
78 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or
79 allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State
80 Personnel Board shall not escalate positions without written
81 approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The
82 Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written
83 approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or positions
84 without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the
85 appropriated level.

86 No general funds authorized to be expended herein shall be
87 used to replace federal funds and/or other special funds used for
88 salaries authorized under the provisions of this act and which are
89 withdrawn and no longer available.

90 None of the funds herein appropriated shall be used in
91 violation of the Internal Revenue Service's Publication 15-A



92 relating to the reporting of income paid to contract employees, as
93 interpreted by the Office of the State Auditor.

94 **SECTION 5.** Each conservation officer and supervisor shall be
95 furnished an allowance for uniforms not to exceed Five Hundred
96 Fifty Dollars (\$550.00) per annum.

97 Provided further, when any personnel of the Bureau of
98 Wildlife and Fisheries are transferred from one (1) county to
99 another on a permanent assignment, the expense monies now paid on
100 out-of-county duty shall not be applicable.

101 **SECTION 6.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
102 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall maintain
103 complete accounting and personnel records related to the
104 expenditure of all funds appropriated under this act and that such
105 records shall be in the same format and level of detail as
106 maintained for Fiscal Year 2023. It is further the intention of
107 the Legislature that the agency's budget request for Fiscal Year
108 2025 shall be submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee
109 in a format and level of detail comparable to the format and level
110 of detail provided during the Fiscal Year 2024 budget request
111 process.

112 **SECTION 7.** In compliance with the "Mississippi Performance
113 Budget and Strategic Planning Act of 1994," it is the intent of
114 the Legislature that the funds provided herein shall be utilized
115 in the most efficient and effective manner possible to achieve the
116 intended mission of this agency. Based on the funding authorized,



117 this agency shall make every effort to attain the targeted
118 performance measures provided below:

119		FY2024
120	<u>Performance Measures</u>	<u>Target</u>
121	Support Services	
122	Number of Hunting and Fishing Licenses Sold	480,000
123	Number of Registrations of Boats	50,000
124	Percent Change in License Sales	1.00
125	Percent Change in Boat Registration	1.00
126	Fisheries	
127	Number of Fish Stocked for Public Waters	2,000,000
128	Number of Customers of DWFP Lakes	70,000
129	Number of Participants in Aquatic Education	6,500
130	Number of Access Facilities Built or	
131	Maintained (Boat Ramps)	35
132	Wildlife	
133	MDWFP Management for Hunters and	
134	Non-Consumptive Users (Man-Days)	125,000
135	Research Projects Conducted to Sustain	
136	Healthy and Abundant Wildlife	
137	Populations	6
138	Acres of Forest Inventory	1,000
139	Acres of Prescribed Burning, Waterfowl	
140	Management, and Timber Management on	
141	WMA's to Sustain Healthy & Abundant	



142	Wildlife	33,000
143	Percent Change in Number of Research	
144	Projects Conducted to Sustain Healthy	
145	and Abundant Wildlife Populations	0.00
146	Percent Change in Number of Private Land	
147	Acres Influenced	0.00
148	Percent Change in the Number of Forest	
149	Inventories Conducted	0.00
150	Law Enforcement	
151	Number of Hunter Education Participants	10,000
152	Number of Hours Patrolled on Land	175,000
153	Number of Hours Patrolled on Water	75,000
154	Number of Criminal Investigations Conducted	8,000
155	Number of Shooting Sport Programs	1,500
156	Number of Boating Accidents	50
157	Number of Boating Fatalities	7
158	Cost per Student for Hunter Education	48.00
159	Percent Increase in Shooting Sports Program	10.00
160	Percent Change in Number of Boating	
161	Accidents	50.00
162	Percent Change in Boating Related Fatalities	0.00
163	Percent Change in Public Contacts per	
164	Officer/per Day	50.00
165	Special Projects	
166	Percent increase in Improved Use of	



167	Special Funds (%)	0.20
168	Motor Vehicle Fund	
169	Number of Vehicles Purchased	35
170	Number of Used Vehicles Sold	35
171	Percent Change in Number of Vehicles in	
172	the Fleet in Order to Maintain Efficient	
173	and Reliable Fleet of Vehicles	1.00
174	Parks	
175	Overnight Accommodation (Cabins/Motels)	250,000
176	Overnight Accommodations (Camping)	795,000
177	Day Use Services	400,000
178	Percent Change in Day Use Services	10.00
179	Percent Change in the Prior Year of	
180	Occupancy Rate of Cabins	25.00
181	Museum	
182	Statewide Education Programming	250,000
183	Total Public Programming	125,000
184	Number of Visitors to Exhibits	95,000
185	Number of Natural Heritage Records Entered	60,000
186	Percent Change of Students that	
187	Understand the Importance of Natural	
188	Resource Conservation	5.00
189	Percent Change of Visitors to Exhibits	10.00
190	Percent Change in the Number of Natural	
191	Heritage Records	10.00



192 A reporting of the degree to which the performance targets
193 set above have been or are being achieved shall be provided in the
194 agency's budget request submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget
195 Committee for Fiscal Year 2025.

196 **SECTION 8.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 2, the
197 following amount shall come from the Department of Wildlife,
198 Fisheries and Parks Special Pearl River Timber Fund No. 3465, for
199 the purpose of making improvements to the Pearl River Wildlife
200 Management Area.....\$ 50,000.00.

201 **SECTION 9.** Of the funds appropriated within this act, the
202 Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks may enter into
203 cooperative agreements with the board of supervisors of any county
204 or any group or combination of counties for the purpose of
205 creating, improving or restoring parks, public game and fish
206 habitat lying or to be situated wholly or partially within such
207 county or in an adjoining county; and each county is empowered and
208 authorized, in its discretion, to expend funds from the general
209 county fund for such purposes from which fund they shall reimburse
210 to the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks the actual cost
211 of all surveying and engineering projects incurred by the
212 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks incidental thereto.
213 Such boards of supervisors are further authorized and empowered,
214 in their discretion, to enter into agreements necessary to carry
215 out the purposes of this act with any other county, the United
216 States Forest Service or any other agency if same should be



217 necessary for the acquisition of land by lease or otherwise for
218 such purposes.

219 **SECTION 10.** It shall be unlawful for any officer, employee
220 or other person whatsoever to use or permit or authorize the use
221 of any automobile or any other motor vehicle owned by the State of
222 Mississippi or any department, agency or institution thereof for
223 any purpose other than upon the official business of the State of
224 Mississippi or any agency, department or institution thereof.

225 It is the intent of the Legislature that motor vehicles
226 authorized to be owned and operated by this agency shall comply
227 with Sections 25-1-77 through 25-1-93, Mississippi Code of 1972.

228 **SECTION 11.** In order to be in compliance with Section
229 63-1-201 et seq., funds are herein provided and may be expended by
230 the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks to pay the costs
231 of commercial driver's licenses for specific employees and/or to
232 reimburse such costs for specific employees who, in the course of
233 their duties and responsibilities, are required to hold a valid
234 Mississippi Commercial Driver's License.

235 **SECTION 12.** The Mississippi Department of Wildlife,
236 Fisheries and Parks is authorized to provide financial support of
237 One Hundred Seventy-five Thousand Dollars (\$175,000.00) and to
238 enter into an agreement with the Mississippi Cooperative Extension
239 Service for a project specialist and related supportive cost.



240 **SECTION 13.** The department is authorized to spend up to
241 sixty percent (60%) of revenue in the State Park Timber Endowment
242 Fund, as needed, to operate and maintain the state parks.

243 **SECTION 14.** It is the intention of the Legislature that
244 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the
245 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things
246 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,
247 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind
248 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to
249 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are
250 made without competitive bids.

251 **SECTION 15.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1, it is
252 the intention of the Legislature that Four Hundred Thousand
253 Dollars (\$400,000.00) is allocated for the detection and
254 prevention of Chronic Wasting Disease in deer populations across
255 the state.

256 **SECTION 16.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1, it is
257 the intention of the Legislature that Seventy-five Thousand
258 Dollars (\$75,000.00) is allocated for LeFleur's Bluff State Park
259 for playground security expenses.

260 **SECTION 17.** Of the funds appropriated herein, Two Hundred
261 Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) may be provided to fund the Youth
262 Participation Initiative for the purpose of educating children in
263 the areas of hunting, fishing, conservation, and safety.



264 **SECTION 18.** The fund created pursuant to Section 49-5-21,
265 Mississippi Code of 1972, and known as the "Fisheries and Wildlife
266 Fund" shall be treated as a special trust fund. All funds derived
267 from the sale of licenses, fees, fines and other revenues received
268 by the department as provided by law, shall be deposited in the
269 Fisheries and Wildlife Fund. In addition, revenue derived from
270 the sale of timber on wildlife management areas, refuges and
271 preserves shall be deposited into an account established for such
272 revenues under the Fisheries and Wildlife Fund. The interest and
273 any investment income earned on the fund shall be credited by the
274 State Treasurer to the Fisheries and Wildlife Fund and shall not
275 be paid into the General Fund. Any unexpended funds remaining in
276 the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse and shall
277 remain in the fund. Nothing in this section shall prevent the use
278 of said funds from maintenance and upgrade of wildlife management
279 areas.

280 **SECTION 19.** It is the intention of the Legislature that no
281 more than One Million Three Hundred Thousand Dollars
282 (\$1,300,000.00) be expended from the Motor Vehicle Fund for the
283 purchase of any type of motor vehicle.

284 **SECTION 20.** The executive director of the Department of
285 Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks is authorized to enter into an
286 agreement with any public or private entities to manage any park
287 or parks within the state park system.



288 **SECTION 21.** It is the intent of the Legislature that no
289 state-owned wildlife management area be closed and that to the
290 greatest practicable extent, department land management decisions
291 and actions may not result in any net loss of any acreage
292 available for hunting opportunities that existed on July 1, 2006,
293 as provided in Section 49-5-99(4). It is the intention of the
294 Legislature that no state park be closed without legislative
295 approval.

296 **SECTION 22.** It is the intent of the Legislature that the
297 Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall have
298 the authority to enter into multi-year contracts for the purpose
299 of placing a sign on such state park property under the
300 department's domain, in accordance with any applicable rules and
301 regulations. All proceeds generated from these activities shall
302 remain with the department and shall be deposited into the proper
303 special fund.

304 **SECTION 23.** It is the intent of the Legislature that from
305 the funds available to the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and
306 Parks, the department may purchase and pay premium(s) on property
307 damage insurance on its motor vehicles, boats, trailers, real
308 property improvements, buildings, furnishings, and such other
309 assets as may be appropriate or practical, and/or as required by a
310 granting entity.

311 **SECTION 24.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions
312 of Section 2, One Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars



313 (\$1,750,000.00) shall be designated for the purpose of defraying
314 the operational expenses of Special Projects. None of these funds
315 shall be used for "Personal Services."

316 **SECTION 25.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
317 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall have the
318 authority to receive, budget and expend funds from the Gulf and
319 Wildlife Protection Fund, not to exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars
320 (\$50,000.00) for the purpose of preservation, protection,
321 conservation, and acquisition of waters, land and wildlife of this
322 state.

323 **SECTION 26.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
324 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with
325 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency
326 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their
327 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally
328 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for
329 actions contrary to this provision.

330 **SECTION 27.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1, it is
331 the intention of the Legislature that Fifty-eight Thousand Five
332 Hundred Ninety-three Dollars (\$58,593.00) may be allocated for the
333 Hunter Education program supported from the General Fund court
334 assessments.

335 **SECTION 28.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
336 necessary, is reappropriated out of any money in the Capital
337 Expense Fund not otherwise appropriated for the Department of



338 Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for the purpose of reauthorizing
339 the expenditure of Capital Expense Funds, as authorized in HB
340 1605, 2022 Regular Session to provide for repairs and renovations
341 to state parks and museums for the fiscal year beginning July 1,
342 2023, and ending June 30, 2024.....\$ 6,000,000.00.

343 Notwithstanding the amount reappropriated under this section,
344 the amount that may be expended under the authority of this
345 section, shall not exceed the unexpended balance of the funds
346 remaining as of June 30, 2023, from the amount authorized for the
347 previous fiscal year. In addition, this reappropriation shall not
348 change the purpose for which the funds were originally authorized.

349 **SECTION 29.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions
350 of Section 2, Thirteen Million Dollars (\$13,000,000.00), or so
351 much thereof, shall be derived out of any money in the State
352 Treasury to the credit of the Capital Expense Fund, as created in
353 Section 27-103-303, Mississippi Code of 1972, and allocated in a
354 manner as determined by the Treasurer's Office. The purpose of
355 these funds are to assist the Department with improving and
356 developing the area in the LeFleur's Bluff Education and Tourism
357 Complex and in coordination with the Mississippi Children's
358 Museum, and the Department of Finance and Administration in order
359 to promote tourism, education, and recreational activity that
360 contributes to community well-being.

361 **SECTION 30.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions
362 of Section 2, Seven Million Dollars (\$7,000,000.00), or so much



363 thereof, shall be derived out of any money in the State Treasury
364 to the credit of the Capital Expense Fund, as created in Section
365 27-103-303, Mississippi Code of 1972, and allocated in a manner as
366 determined by the Treasurer's Office. This appropriation is made
367 for the purpose of providing the funds necessary to authorize the
368 expenditure of funds for Repairs and Renovations at State Parks.

369 **SECTION 31.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions
370 of Section 2, One Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars
371 (\$1,100,000.00), or so much thereof, shall be derived out of any
372 money in the State Treasury to the credit of the Capital Expense
373 Fund, as created in Section 27-103-303, Mississippi Code of 1972,
374 and allocated in a manner as determined by the Treasurer's Office.
375 This appropriation is made for the purpose of providing the funds
376 necessary to authorize the expenditure of funds for equipment for
377 the agency.

378 **SECTION 32.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
379 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the
380 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
381 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal
382 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
383 proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

384 **SECTION 33.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
385 and after July 1, 2023.

