

By: Senator(s) McCaughn, DeBar, Seymour

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 538

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO DECLARE A  
2 STATE OF EMERGENCY IN CERTAIN COUNTIES IN MISSISSIPPI WHICH ARE  
3 EXPERIENCING MAJOR EXPENSE AND SEVERE ECONOMIC IMPACT LOSS DUE TO  
4 ONGOING DROUGHT CONDITIONS CAUSING PINE BEETLE OUTBREAK AND DEAD  
5 TREE REMOVAL.

6 WHEREAS, in accordance with the provisions of Sections  
7 33-15-11 and 33-15-301, Mississippi Code of 1972, which authorize  
8 the Governor to declare an emergency in counties in the State of  
9 Mississippi in which any natural disaster has occurred that has  
10 caused damage of sufficient severity and magnitude that will  
11 require massive state and/or federal assistance, the Legislature  
12 finds that the "pine beetle outbreak" in our state due to the  
13 ongoing drought meets the criteria for a "catastrophic disaster"  
14 which would authorize the implementation of action and relief  
15 programs of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency; and

16 WHEREAS, the Pine Beetle Outbreak Due to Ongoing Drought  
17 Information received by the Legislature is as follows:

- 18 • The affected area consists of approximately 2.5 million  
19 acres in Mississippi;



20           • There are approximately 811,111 spots covering 80,415  
21 acres;

22           • 12.5 million trees were estimated to be dead by the end of  
23 December 2023;

24           • \$96 Million is the estimated economic impact loss;

25           • Miles of power line and utility rights-of-way are and will  
26 continue to be impacted by the dead trees;

27           • Counties are making major expenditures to keep road  
28 rights-of-way (ROW'S) clear of falling trees;

29           • MDOT has already and will continue to have major expense  
30 to keep rights-of-way (ROW'S) clear of falling trees;

31           • Municipalities will also have same issues as county and  
32 state rights-of-way (ROW'S);

33           • Residential and metropolitan areas are being impacted with  
34 only one option to remove dead trees before falling on homes and  
35 businesses, which is high-cost tree removal that some people can't  
36 afford;

37           • Insect outbreaks run in two- to three-year cycles. The  
38 second year is always worse than the first year. Already reports  
39 of beetles swarming in unbelievable numbers this year;

40           • Beetles have not wintered as they normally do and have  
41 continued to kill more trees all through the winter as if it were  
42 still fall or summer; and

43           WHEREAS, it has been found that local resources are unable to  
44 cope with the effects of said emergency:



45           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
46 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That  
47 we do hereby request the Governor to declare a state of emergency  
48 in certain counties in Mississippi which are experiencing major  
49 expense and severe economic impact loss due to ongoing drought  
50 conditions causing pine beetle outbreak and dead tree removal, and  
51 authorize the implementation of action and relief programs of the  
52 Mississippi Emergency Management Agency as appropriate.

53           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a certified copy of this  
54 resolution be transmitted to the Governor of the State of  
55 Mississippi and the Executive Director of the Mississippi  
56 Emergency Management Agency, and made available to the Capitol  
57 Press Corps.

