

By: Representatives Bounds, Read, Anderson  
(122nd), Clark, Eure, Hale, Jackson (11th),  
Paden, Pigott

To: Appropriations B;  
Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 1726

1 AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE SUPPORT AND  
2 MAINTENANCE OF THE STATE FORESTRY COMMISSION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR  
3 2026.

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 State Forestry Commission for the fiscal year beginning  
9 July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....  
10 .....\$ 17,274,665.00.

11 **SECTION 2.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be  
12 necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the special fund in  
13 the State Treasury to the credit of the State Forestry Commission  
14 which is comprised of special source funds collected by or  
15 otherwise available to the commission, for the support and  
16 maintenance of the commission for the fiscal year beginning  
17 July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....\$ 13,495,131.00.



18           **SECTION 3.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of  
19 this act, the following positions are authorized:

20       AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

21           Permanent:                   246

22           Time-Limited:               7

23           With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's  
24 responsibility to make certain that funds required for Personal  
25 Services for Fiscal Year 2027 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2026 funds  
26 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are  
27 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 budget by the Mississippi  
28 Legislature. The Legislature shall determine the agency's  
29 personal services appropriation, which the State Personnel Board  
30 shall publish. The agency's personal services appropriation may  
31 consist of restricted funds for approved vacancies for Fiscal Year  
32 2026 that may be utilized to fill vacant Fiscal Year 2025  
33 headcount. It shall be the agency's responsibility to ensure that  
34 the funds provided for vacancies are used to increase headcount  
35 and not for promotions, title changes, in-range salary adjustments  
36 or any other mechanism for increasing salaries for current  
37 employees. It is the Legislature's intention that no employee  
38 salary falls below the minimum salary established by the  
39 Mississippi State Personnel Board.

40           Additionally, the State Personnel Board shall determine and  
41 publish the projected annualized payroll costs based on current  
42 employees. It shall be the responsibility of the agency head to



43 ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2026 do  
44 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If  
45 the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 projected cost exceeds the  
46 annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the  
47 State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be  
48 essential for the agency.

49 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with  
50 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or  
51 allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State  
52 Personnel Board shall not escalate positions without written  
53 approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The  
54 Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written  
55 approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or positions  
56 without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the  
57 appropriated level.

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

62 None of the funds herein appropriated shall be used in  
63 violation of the Internal Revenue Service's Publication 15-A  
64 relating to the reporting of income paid to contract employees, as  
65 interpreted by the Office of the State Auditor.

66 With the funds appropriated herein, it shall be the agency's  
67 responsibility to ensure that no employee in a job classification



68 with a minimum salary of Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) or  
69 greater shall receive an in-range adjustment through progression,  
70 equity, or immediate labor market increases.

71 **SECTION 4.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the  
72 State Forestry Commission shall maintain complete accounting and  
73 personnel records related to the expenditure of all funds  
74 appropriated under this act and that such records shall be in the  
75 same format and level of detail as maintained for Fiscal Year  
76 2025. It is further the intention of the Legislature that the  
77 agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2027 shall be submitted to  
78 the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format and level of  
79 detail comparable to the format and level of detail provided  
80 during the Fiscal Year 2026 budget request process.

81 **SECTION 5.** In compliance with the "Mississippi Performance  
82 Budget and Strategic Planning Act of 1994," it is the intent of  
83 the Legislature that the funds provided herein shall be utilized  
84 in the most efficient and effective manner possible to achieve the  
85 intended mission of this agency. Based on the funding authorized,  
86 this agency shall make every effort to attain the targeted  
87 performance measures provided below:

88		FY2026
89	<u>Performance Measures</u>	<u>Target</u>
90	Forest Protection & Information	
91	Average Suppression Time (Hrs from	
92	Detection to Control)	2.80



93	Number of Acres Burned Under a	
94	Prescribed Burn Program	15,000
95	Percent of Fires Suppressed at 100 Acres	
96	or Less	95.00
97	Forest Management	
98	Forest Resource Development Program	
99	Acres Regenerated or Improved	35,000
100	Acres Monitored for Insect, Storm or Disease	19,200,000
101	Re-Inventory 20% of State's Forest Lands	
102	(% of Regions)	20.00
103	Percent Increase of Re-Inventory of	
104	State Forest Land	20.00

105 A reporting of the degree to which the performance targets  
106 set above have been or are being achieved shall be provided in the  
107 agency's budget request submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget  
108 Committee for Fiscal Year 2027.

109 **SECTION 6.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 2, it is the  
110 intention of the Legislature that Two Hundred Thousand Dollars  
111 (\$200,000.00) shall be transferred to the Department of  
112 Agriculture and Commerce for the Beaver Control or Eradication  
113 Program during the Fiscal Year 2026.

114 **SECTION 7.** Any funds in the Salary, Wages and Fringe  
115 Benefits major object of expenditure may be used to purchase  
116 accumulated compensatory time within the funds available.



117       **SECTION 8.** It is the intention of the Legislature that  
118 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the  
119 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things  
120 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,  
121 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind  
122 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to  
123 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are  
124 made without competitive bids.

125       **SECTION 9.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the  
126 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with  
127 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency  
128 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their  
129 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally  
130 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for  
131 actions contrary to this provision.

132       **SECTION 10.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by  
133 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the  
134 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon  
135 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal  
136 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the  
137 proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

138       **SECTION 11.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
139 and after July 1, 2025.

