MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2025

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

To: Appropriations B; Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 1726
(As Passed the House)

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

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

SECTION 1. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the State General Fund not otherwise appropriated, for the support and maintenance of the State Forestry Commission for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026............................ ....$ 17,274,665.00.

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

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

AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

Permanent:	246
Time-Limited:	7

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

Additionally, the State Personnel Board shall determine and publish the projected annualized payroll costs based on current employees. It shall be the responsibility of the agency head to ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2026 do not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 projected cost exceeds the annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be essential for the agency.

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

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

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

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

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

	FY2026
Performance Measures	Target
Forest Protection & Information	
Average Suppression Time (Hrs from Detection to Control)	2.80
Number of Acres Burned Under a Prescribed Burn Program	15,000
Percent of Fires Suppressed at 100 Acres or Less	95.00
Forest Management	

Forest Resource Development Program	
Acres Regenerated or Improved	35,000
Acres Monitored for Insect, Storm or Disease	19,200,000
Re-Inventory 20% of State's Forest Lands (% of Regions)	20.00
Percent Increase of Re-Inventory of State Forest Land	20.00

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

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

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

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

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

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

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