

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

To: Appropriations B;
Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 1729

1 AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE SUPPORT AND
2 MAINTENANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES FOR THE FISCAL
3 YEAR 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 Department of Marine Resources for the fiscal year
9 beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....
10\$ 3,555,266.00.

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 Marine
14 Resources for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending
15 June 30, 2026.....\$ 256,844,716.00.

16 Of the funds appropriated in this section, Three Million
17 Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$3,050,000.00) is derived from the state
18 excise taxes upon gasoline, oil and other petroleum products.



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

21 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

22 Permanent: 108

23 Time-Limited: 65

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

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



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

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

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

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

67 **SECTION 4.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
68 Department of Marine Resources shall maintain complete accounting



69 and personnel records related to the expenditure of all funds
70 appropriated under this act and that such records shall be in the
71 same format and level of detail as maintained for Fiscal Year
72 2025. It is further the intention of the Legislature that the
73 agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2027 shall be submitted to
74 the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format and level of
75 detail comparable to the format and level of detail provided
76 during the Fiscal Year 2026 budget request process.

77 **SECTION 5.** Each Marine Conservation Officer and Supervisor
78 shall be furnished an allowance for uniforms not to exceed Six
79 Hundred Dollars (\$600.00) per annum.

80 **SECTION 6.** In addition to all other sums heretofore
81 appropriated, the following sum, or so much thereof as may be
82 necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State
83 Treasury to the credit of the Tidelands Fund No. 3345200000 to the
84 Department of Marine Resources for the purpose of defraying the
85 expenses of the tidelands projects for the fiscal year beginning
86 July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026\$ 11,700,000.00.

87 This amount is allocated as follows:

88 Total Public Access Projects.....	\$ 4,576,165.00
89 Total Management Projects.....	\$ 4,576,164.00
90 Bond Repayment	\$ 1,547,671.00
91 Prior Year Projects.....	\$ 1,000,000.00
92 Total Tidelands Funds.....	\$11,700,000.00



Each political subdivision receiving funds authorized in this section shall be held responsible for complying with Section 29-15-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, and shall be subject to an audit by the State Auditor and shall submit detailed reports beginning June 30, and every six (6) months thereafter for the duration of the project to the Department of Marine Resources on how funds authorized in this section were expended.

It is the intention of the Legislature that any political subdivision seeking to qualify for tidelands funds for the subsequent fiscal year shall submit a proposal to the Department of Marine Resources no later than July 1, 2025. All proposals submitted will be reviewed and evaluated by the Department of Marine Resources in accordance to department plans and procedures. Multiphased projects, multiyear projects, proposed projects with high dollar value and projects that have a record of stacking funds shall be considered as low priority projects when evaluated.

It is the intention of the Legislature that if the amount of the Tidelands funds appropriated in this act exceed the actual amount of tidelands funds available, the available funds shall be allocated on a pro rata basis between projects listed in this section.

SECTION 7. It is the intention of the Legislature that the department shall place any special trust funds appropriated to the department in a special trust fund and the interest earned on the principal shall be credited to the special trust fund. Monies in



the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be retained in the special trust fund for use in the next succeeding fiscal year. The department may use the interest earned on the fund to pay reasonable costs for administering the fund and related projects.

SECTION 8. It is the intention of the Legislature that the Department of Marine Resources has the authorization to move tidelands funds between approved projects upon request from entity and proper completion of Form TTF-6 documentation.

SECTION 9. It is the intention of the Legislature for the Department of Marine Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality to continue with any agency partnerships, including grant agreements, that provide environmental projects to restore Mississippi's natural resources in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

SECTION 10. 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 11. Of the funds appropriated in Section 2, Ninety-two Million Seven Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Two Hundred Twenty-four Dollars (\$92,725,224.00) is provided for the funding



143 of the following Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA)
144 projects for FY 2026:

145 (a) To assist the City of Waveland with
146 Center City Infrastructure Improvements -
147 Sewer.....\$ 4,000,000.00

148 (b) To assist the City of D'Iberville with
149 Working Waterfront Marina Expansion Project
150 Phase II.....\$ 2,500,000.00

151 (c) To assist the City of Ocean Springs
152 with Washington Avenue and Front Beach Utility
153 Improvement.....\$ 1,200,000.00

154 (d) To assist the City of Gautier with
155 Marin Bluff and Hickory Hills Sewer Improvements....\$ 2,701,150.00

156 (e) To assist the City of Moss Point with
157 Riverfront Coastal River Protection.....\$ 3,750,000.00

158 (f) To assist the City of Moss Point with
159 Storm Water Park.....\$ 118,500.00

160 (g) To assist the Jackson County Utility
161 Authority with Poticaw Road Sewer Extension.....\$ 1,200,000.00

162 (h) To assist Mississippi State University
163 with Fixed Lab Equipment.....\$ 865,000.00

164 (i) To assist the Diamondhead Water and Sewer
165 District Sewer Improvements Phase III.....\$ 1,000,000.00

166 (j) To assist the Hancock County Water and
167 Sewer District with Asbestos Water Pipe Replacement



168 And Port Bienville Water Improvements.....\$ 1,000,000.00
 169 (k) To assist the Kiln Utility and Fire
 170 District with Hwy 603 Sewer Expansion from
 171 Hwy 43 To Cuevas Town Road.....\$ 2,452,575.00
 172 (l) To assist The Nature Conservancy with
 173 Using Brood Stock Reefs to Enhance Oyster
 174 Production on Commercial Leases.....\$ 1,000,000.00
 175 (m) To assist the City of Ocean Springs
 176 with Front Beach Bulkhead.....\$ 1,600,000.00
 177 (n) To assist the City of Pascagoula with
 178 the Live Oak Corridor Drainage to Remedy
 179 Flooding.....\$ 2,000,000.00
 180 (o) To assist the City of Gulfport with the
 181 North Gulfport Wastewater Treatment Plant UV
 182 Disinfection.....\$ 376,650.00
 183 (p) To assist the Department of Marine
 184 Resources with GOMESA project management,
 185 development and mitigation.....\$ 699,022.00
 186 (q) To assist the Hancock County Utility
 187 Authority with the Stennis Space Center
 188 Wastewater Conveyance Project.....\$ 7,934,956.00
 189 (r) To assist the City of Long Beach with
 190 the Small Craft Harbor Eastern Bulkhead
 191 Improvements.....\$ 583,835.00
 192 (s) To assist the City of Pass Christian



193 with the West Breakwater Wall Hurricane
 194 Mitigation Improvements.....\$ 2,518,900.00
 195 (t) To assist the Department of Marine
 196 Resources with Oyster Spat.....\$ 1,756,128.00
 197 (u) To assist the Institute for Marine
 198 Mammal Studies with Monitoring and Evaluation of
 199 Sea Turtle Nesting in Mississippi.....\$ 856,364.00
 200 (v) To assist the University of Southern
 201 Mississippi with the Mississippi Coastal Fishery
 202 Resource Assessment.....\$ 55,110.00
 203 (w) To assist the Hancock County Port and
 204 Harbor Commission with Sewer Construction and
 205 Improvements to Site 1 at Port Bienville
 206 Industrial Park.....\$ 1,749,220.00
 207 (x) To assist the University of Southern
 208 Mississippi with Oak Island Oyster Company in the
 209 Development and Testing of an Off Bottom Oyster
 210 Structure.....\$ 1,195,571.00
 211 (y) To assist Jackson County with Coastal
 212 Roadway Hurricane Protection.....\$ 750,000.00
 213 (z) To assist the Institute for Marine
 214 Mammal Studies with Monitoring/Gauging Habitat
 215 Suitability for Dolphins and Turtles.....\$ 1,298,793.00
 216 (aa) To assist the Kiln Utility District
 217 with Jourdan River Shores Sewer Improvements



218 Phase II.....\$ 2,163,216.00
 219 (bb) To assist Harrison County with Sand
 220 Beach Outfall Coordination.....\$ 1,568,001.00
 221 (cc) To assist the City of Ocean Springs
 222 with Sewer Rehabilitation.....\$ 1,960,000.00
 223 (dd) To assist the Department of Marine
 224 Resources with Oyster Cultch.....\$ 1,000,000.00
 225 (ee) To assist the City of Pass Christian
 226 with Highway 90 Hurricane Mitigation
 227 Improvements.....\$ 1,092,205.00
 228 (ff) To assist Coastal Mississippi with
 229 the promotion of the Seafood Industry and its
 230 Economic Contributions to the State.....\$ 444,941.00
 231 (gg) To assist the City of Diamondhead
 232 with Drainage, Flood Prevention and Water
 233 Quality Improvements Phase II.....\$ 1,908,664.00
 234 (hh) To assist Jackson County with East
 235 Beach Outfalls/Shoreline Protection.....\$ 1,710,000.00
 236 (ii) To assist the City of Gautier with
 237 Hickory Hills/Lagrange Water Quality and
 238 Stormwater Improvements.....\$ 2,790,271.00
 239 (jj) To assist the City of Biloxi with
 240 Keegan Bayou Restoration.....\$ 2,520,000.00
 241 (kk) To assist the Department of Marine
 242 Resources with the Coffee Creek Outfall



243	Pavilion.....	\$	419,256.00
244	(ll) To assist the City of Long Beach with		
245	Small Craft Harbor Southern Quay Bulkhead		
246	Improvements.....	\$	2,554,000.00
247	(mm) To assist the Department of Marine		
248	Resources with Bonnet Carre Spillway		
249	Mitigation.....	\$	926,879.00
250	(nn) To assist the City of D'Iberville with		
251	the Working Waterfront and Seafood Harbor		
252	Project.....	\$	500,000.00
253	(oo) To assist the University of Southern		
254	Mississippi with the Ocean Enterprise		
255	Project.....	\$	24,788.00
256	(pp) To assist the Department of Marine		
257	Resources with the Coffee Creek Outfall.....	\$	21,906.00
258	(qq) To assist the Department of Marine		
259	Resources with the Coffee Creek water quality.....	\$	28,073.00
260	(rr) To assist Jackson County Board of		
261	Supervisors with the Front Beach Erosion		
262	Control.....	\$	640,243.00
263	(ss) To assist the Department of Marine		
264	Resources with GOMESA project management,		
265	development and mitigation.....	\$	472,003.00
266	(tt) To assist the Department of Marine		
267	Resources with artificial reef construction.....	\$	31,397.00



268	(uu) To assist the Department of	
269	Environmental Quality with water quality.....\$	837,804.00
270	(vv) To assist the Department of Marine	
271	Resources with Bonnet Carre Response.....\$	4,636.00
272	(ww) To assist the City of Pass Christian	
273	with Sanitary Sewer Pump Station Repairs.....\$	901,375.00
274	(xx) To assist Hancock County with Atlantic	
275	Street Sewer Improvements.....\$	102,929.00
276	(yy) To assist the City of Long Beach with	
277	Small Craft Harbor SE Bulkhead Improvements.....\$	280,214.00
278	(zz) To assist the Kiln Utility District	
279	with the Jordan Shores Sewer Force Main	
280	Relocation.....\$	99,852.00
281	(aaa) To assist the City of Biloxi with	
282	the Point Cadet Living Shoreline.....\$	756,537.00
283	(bbb) To assist the Department of Marine	
284	Resources with MS Reef Fish Monitoring and	
285	Assessment.....\$	43,074.00
286	(ccc) To assist Hancock County Utility	
287	Authority with Oak Harbor Sewer Improvements.....\$	2,719,247.00
288	(ddd) To assist Hancock County Port and	
289	Harbor Commission with Port Bienville	
290	Conservation Management.....\$	235,327.00
291	(eee) To assist the City of Pascagoula	
292	with Buena Vista Area Drainage.....\$	482,340.00



293	(fff) To assist the City of Pass Christian	
294	with Gravity Sewer System Improvements Phase I.....\$	784,782.00
295	(ggg) To assist the City of Pascagoula with	
296	Point Park Pier Repair/Improvements.....\$	31,971.00
297	(hhh) To assist Mississippi State University	
298	with the Evaluation and Monitoring of Marine Mammal	
299	and Sea Turtles after Bonnet Carre Spillway	
300	Opening.....\$	691,428.00
301	(iii) To assist the American Shrimp	
302	Processors Association with the Shrimp	
303	Processors Feasibility Study.....\$	586,126.00
304	(jjj) To assist the Jackson County Utility	
305	Authority with Septic System Abatements.....\$	1,258,817.00
306	(kkk) To assist the University of Southern	
307	Mississippi with the Mississippi Coastal Fishery	
308	Resource Assessment.....\$	650.00
309	(lll) To assist the Department of Marine	
310	Resources with the Katrina Key Expansion.....\$	183,425.00
311	(mmm) To assist the Secretary of State with	
312	the Broadwater Marina Restoration.....\$	3,578,590.00
313	(nnn) To assist the City of Pass Christian	
314	with Sewer Pump Station Repairs.....\$	342,585.00
315	(ooo) To assist the City of Diamondhead	
316	with Drainage, Flood Prevention and Water	
317	Quality Improvements.....\$	1,080,108.00



318 (ppp) To assist the Department of Marine
 319 Resources with the Bonnet Carre and Mid Breton
 320 Response.....\$ 477,407.00
 321 (qqq) To assist the City of Ocean Springs
 322 with the Front Beach Pub Access and Storm Water
 323 Mitigation Improvements.....\$ 1,569,365.00
 324 (rrr) To assist the City of Pass Christian
 325 with Phase II of the Gravity Sewer System
 326 Improvements.....\$ 4,387,486.00
 327 (sss) To assist the Department of Marine
 328 Resources with the Off Bottom Oyster
 329 Aquaculture.....\$ 1,219,050.00
 330 (ttt) To assist the Department of Marine
 331 Resources with the Pelican Key Beneficial
 332 Use Site.....\$ 348,220.00
 333 (uuu) To assist the Department of Marine
 334 Resources with Phase II of the Katrina Key
 335 Expansion.....\$ 400,000.00
 336 (vvv) To assist the Jackson County Board
 337 of Supervisors with the Pascagoula Beach Open
 338 Channel Outfalls.....\$ 1,339,000.00
 339 (www) To assist the Department of Marine
 340 Resources with water testing for Seafood
 341 Consumption Safety.....\$ 45,262.00



342 **SECTION 12.** It is the intent of the Legislature that the
343 Department of Marine Resources shall have the authority to expend
344 funds in an amount not to exceed Ten Million Dollars
345 (\$10,000,000.00) from funds for the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security
346 Act (GOMESA) that may become available to the agency in fiscal
347 year 2026 in accordance with the rules and regulations of the
348 Department of Finance and Administration in a manner consistent
349 with the escalation of federal funds.

350 **SECTION 13.** It is the intention of the Legislature that none
351 of the funds provided herein shall be used to pay certain
352 utilities for state furnished housing for any employees. Such
353 utilities shall include electricity, natural gas, butane, propane,
354 cable and phone services. Where actual cost cannot be determined,
355 the agency shall be required to provide meters to be in compliance
356 with legislative intent. Such state furnished housing shall
357 include single-family and multi-family residences but shall not
358 include any dormitory residences. Allowances for such utilities
359 shall be prohibited.

360 **SECTION 14.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
361 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with
362 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency
363 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their
364 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally
365 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for
366 actions contrary to this provision.



367 **SECTION 15.** With the funds appropriated herein, the
368 Department of Marine Resources is authorized to make payments for
369 expenses incurred during prior fiscal years for an amount not to
370 exceed Four Hundred Eight Thousand Six Hundred Fifty-seven Dollars
371 and Forty Cents (\$408,657.40).

372 **SECTION 16.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
373 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the
374 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
375 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal
376 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
377 proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

378 **SECTION 17.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
379 and after July 1, 2025.

