

Senate Amendments to House Bill No. 1737

TO THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE:

THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT THE SENATE HAS ADOPTED THE AMENDMENTS SET OUT BELOW:

AMENDMENT NO. 1

Amend by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

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, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....
10\$ 17,322,192.00.

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, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....
19\$ 73,770,137.00.

20 The following sum, which is included in the sum appropriated
21 above in this section, is appropriated out of the state excise

taxes upon gasoline, oil and other petroleum products to the Fisheries and Wildlife Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....\$ 5,750,000.00.

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

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

SECTION 3. Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of Section 2 to the Bureau of Wildlife and Fisheries, funds in the amount of One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Three Hundred Thirty-five Dollars (\$125,335.00) shall be derived from the Education Enhancement Fund deposited pursuant to Sections 27-65-75 and 27-67-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of Project WILD for Fiscal Year 2026.

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

48 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

49 Permanent: 518

50 Time-Limited: 42

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 2027 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2026 funds
54 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are
55 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 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 2026 that may be utilized to fill vacant Fiscal Year 2025
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 2026 do
72 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If
73 the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 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

another on a permanent assignment, the expense monies now paid on out-of-county duty shall not be applicable.

SECTION 6. It is the intention of the Legislature that the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks 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 7. 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 |
|---|---------------|
| <u>Performance Measures</u> | <u>Target</u> |
| Support Services | |
| Number of Hunting and Fishing Licenses Sold | 480,000 |
| Number of Registrations of Boats | 65,000 |
| Percent Change in License Sales | 0.01 |

| | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 125 | Percent Change in Boat Registration | 0.08 |
| 126 | Fisheries | |
| 127 | Number of Fish Stocked for Public Waters | 1,500,000 |
| 128 | Number of Customers of DWFP Lakes | 80,000 |
| 129 | Number of Participants in Aquatic Education | 5,500 |
| 130 | Number of Access Facilities Built or | |
| 131 | Maintained (Boat Ramps) | 37 |
| 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 | 25,000 |
| 143 | Percent Change in Number of Research | |
| 144 | Projects Conducted to Sustain Healthy | |
| 145 | and Abundant Wildlife Populations | -33.00 |
| 146 | Percent Change in Number of Private Land | |
| 147 | Acres Influenced | 0.00 |
| 148 | Percent Change in the Number of Forest | |
| 149 | Inventories Conducted | -80.00 |
| 150 | Law Enforcement | |

| | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 151 | Number of Hunter Education Participants | 11,000 |
| 152 | Number of Hours Patrolled on Land | 181,500 |
| 153 | Number of Hours Patrolled on Water | 32,500 |
| 154 | Number of Criminal Investigations Conducted | 8,000 |
| 155 | Number of Shooting Sport Programs | 1,600 |
| 156 | Number of Boating Accidents | 40 |
| 157 | Number of Boating Fatalities | 7 |
| 158 | Cost per Student for Hunter Education | 51.00 |
| 159 | Cost per Sports Program | 550.00 |
| 160 | Percent Change in Number of Boating | |
| 161 | Accidents | 0.00 |
| 162 | Percent Change in Boating Related Fatalities | 0.00 |
| 163 | Percent Change in Public Contacts per | |
| 164 | Officer/per Day | 15.00 |
| 165 | Special Projects | |
| 166 | Percent Increase in Improved Use of | |
| 167 | Special Funds | 0.00 |
| 168 | Parks | |
| 169 | Overnight Accommodation (Cabins/Motels) | 300,000 |
| 170 | Overnight Accommodations (Camping) | 650,000 |
| 171 | Day Use Services | 400,000 |
| 172 | Percent Change in Day Use Services | 0.00 |
| 173 | Percent Change in the Prior Year of | |
| 174 | Occupancy Rate of Cabins | 20.00 |
| 175 | Museum | |
| 176 | Statewide Education Programming | 145,000 |

| | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 177 | Total Public Programming | 250,000 |
| 178 | Number of Visitors to Exhibits | 90,000 |
| 179 | Number of Natural Heritage Records Entered | 85,000 |
| 180 | Percent Change of Students that | |
| 181 | Understand the Importance of Natural | |
| 182 | Resource Conservation | 5.00 |
| 183 | Percent Change of Visitors to Exhibits | 3.00 |

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

188 **SECTION 8.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 2, the
189 following amount shall be derived from the Department of Wildlife,
190 Fisheries and Parks Special Pearl River Timber Fund No. 3465, for
191 the purpose of making improvements to the Pearl River Wildlife
192 Management Area.....\$ 50,000.00.

193 **SECTION 9.** Of the funds appropriated within this act, the
194 Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks may enter into
195 cooperative agreements with the board of supervisors of any county
196 or any group or combination of counties for the purpose of
197 creating, improving or restoring parks, public game and fish
198 habitat lying or to be situated wholly or partially within such
199 county or in an adjoining county; and each county is empowered and
200 authorized, in its discretion, to expend funds from the general
201 county fund for such purposes from which fund they shall reimburse
202 to the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks the actual cost

of all surveying and engineering projects incurred by the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks incidental thereto. Such boards of supervisors are further authorized and empowered, in their discretion, to enter into agreements necessary to carry out the purposes of this act with any other county, the United States Forest Service or any other agency if same should be necessary for the acquisition of land by lease or otherwise for such purposes.

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

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

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

SECTION 12. The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks is authorized to provide financial support of

One Hundred Seventy-five Thousand Dollars (\$175,000.00) and to enter into an agreement with the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service for a project specialist and related supportive cost.

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

SECTION 14. 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 15. Of the funds appropriated in Section 1, it is the intention of the Legislature that Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$400,000.00) is allocated for the detection and prevention of Chronic Wasting Disease in deer populations across the state.

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

SECTION 17. Of the funds appropriated herein, Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) may be provided to fund the Youth

Participation Initiative for the purpose of educating children in the areas of hunting, fishing, conservation, and safety.

SECTION 18. It is the intention of the Legislature that no more than One Million Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,300,000.00) be expended from the Motor Vehicle Fund for the purchase of any type of motor vehicle.

SECTION 19. The executive director of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks is authorized to enter into an agreement with any public or private entities to manage any park or parks within the state park system.

SECTION 20. It is the intent of the Legislature that no state-owned wildlife management area be closed and that to the greatest practicable extent, department land management decisions and actions may not result in any net loss of any acreage available for hunting opportunities that existed on July 1, 2006, as provided in Section 49-5-99(4). It is the intention of the Legislature that no state park be closed without legislative approval.

SECTION 21. It is the intent of the Legislature that the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall have the authority to enter into multi-year contracts for the purpose of placing a sign on such state park property under the department's domain, in accordance with any applicable rules and regulations. All proceeds generated from these activities shall remain with the department and shall be deposited into the proper special fund.

280 **SECTION 22.** It is the intent of the Legislature that from
281 the funds available to the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and
282 Parks, the department may purchase and pay premium(s) on property
283 damage insurance on its motor vehicles, boats, trailers, real
284 property improvements, buildings, furnishings, and such other
285 assets as may be appropriate or practical, and/or as required by a
286 granting entity.

287 **SECTION 23.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions
288 of Section 2, One Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars
289 (\$1,750,000.00) shall be designated for the purpose of defraying
290 the operational expenses of Special Projects. None of these funds
291 shall be used for "Personal Services."

292 **SECTION 24.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
293 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall have the
294 authority to receive, budget and expend funds from the Gulf and
295 Wildlife Protection Fund, not to exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars
296 (\$50,000.00) for the purpose of preservation, protection,
297 conservation, and acquisition of waters, land and wildlife of this
298 state.

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

306 **SECTION 26.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1, it is
307 the intention of the Legislature that Fifty-eight Thousand Five
308 Hundred Ninety-three Dollars (\$58,593.00) may be allocated for the
309 Hunter Education program supported from the General Fund court
310 assessments.

311 **SECTION 27.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
312 necessary, is reappropriated out of any money in the Capital
313 Expense Fund not otherwise appropriated for the Mississippi
314 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for the purpose of
315 reauthorizing the expenditure of Capital Expense Funds, as
316 authorized in House Bill 1791, 2024 Regular Session, to defray
317 expenses of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for
318 the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026..
319\$ 3,800,000.00.

320 This appropriation is made for the purpose of reauthorizing
321 the expenditure of funds as allocated herein:

322 (a) Projects on the Parks Improvement Plan....\$ 2,300,000.00

323 (b) Museum Admissions Area Renovations.....\$ 1,500,000.00

324 Notwithstanding the amount reappropriated under this section,
325 the amount that may be expended under the authority of this
326 section, shall not exceed the unexpended balance of the funds
327 remaining as of June 30, 2025, from the amount authorized for the
328 previous fiscal year. In addition, this reappropriation shall not
329 change the purpose for which the funds were originally authorized.

330 **SECTION 28.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
331 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the

332 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
333 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal
334 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
335 proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

336 **SECTION 29.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
337 and after July 1, 2025, and shall stand repealed from and after
338 June 30, 2025.

**Further, amend by striking the title in its entirety and
inserting in lieu thereof the following:**

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 2026.

SS15\HB1737A.J

Amanda White
Secretary of the Senate