

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

To: Appropriations A

## HOUSE BILL NO. 5

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 .....\$ 17,751,623.00.

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.....\$ 13,668,617.00.



**SECTION 3.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of this act, not more than the following amount of funds, with the exception of the provisions in this section, shall be expended only for "Personal Services," which includes "Vacancy Funding," for the following authorized number of employment headcount:

**FUNDING:**

General Funds:	\$ 17,141,583.00
Special Funds:	\$ 138,553.00
Total Funds:	\$ 17,332,928.00

**PERSONAL SERVICES:**

Employee Salaries, Wages, and	
Fringe Benefits:	\$ 16,785,156.00
Progressions:	\$ 0.00
Vacancy Funding:	\$ 547,772.00
Total Personal Services:	\$ 17,332,928.00

**AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:**

Permanent:	259
Time-Limited:	7

As used in this section, the term "Personal Services" shall mean funds provided under the major object of expenditure category Personal Services for Salaries, Wages, and Fringe Benefits. Funds in this category shall not be transferred to any other category.

It is the intention of the Legislature to ensure compliance with the Variable Compensation Plan, as outlined in Section 25-9-147, Mississippi Code of 1972. Payment from these funds shall



43 be in accordance with the Variable Compensation Plan promulgated  
44 by the Mississippi State Personnel Board. It is the Legislature's  
45 intention that no employee's salary falls below the minimum salary  
46 established by the Mississippi State Personnel Board.

47 The State Personnel Board shall determine and publish the  
48 projected annual cost of "Personal Services" based on monthly and  
49 year-to-date payroll expenditures in compliance with the  
50 provisions of this act.

51 With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's  
52 responsibility to ensure that no single personnel action or  
53 combination of personnel actions, when annualized, exceeds the  
54 Fiscal Year 2026 appropriation for "Personal Services" with the  
55 exception of escalated funds. Further, it shall be the agency's  
56 responsibility to ensure that funds required to be appropriated  
57 for "Personal Services" for Fiscal Year 2027 do not exceed Fiscal  
58 Year 2026 funds appropriated for that purpose unless programs or  
59 positions are added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2026 budget by the  
60 Mississippi Legislature.

61 If, at the time the agency takes any action to change  
62 "Personal Services," the State Personnel Board determines that the  
63 agency has taken or will take an action that would cause the  
64 agency to exceed the funds appropriated in this act when  
65 annualized for Fiscal Year 2026 or increase the need for "Personal  
66 Services" for Fiscal Year 2027, when annualized, the State  
67 Personnel Board shall process no salary actions until such time as



the requirements of the provisions of this section are met with the exception of new hires determined to be essential for the agency.

When used in this section, "Vacancy Funding" shall mean funds included in the Total Personal Services amount listed above and designated for approved vacancies in Fiscal Year 2026. These funds are to be utilized to increase the number of filled headcounts that were authorized but unfilled as of the last day of Fiscal Year 2025. If the agency fills additional headcounts after May 1, 2025, until the end of Fiscal Year 2025, the amount of available Vacancy Funding may be proportionally reduced to reflect the updated number of filled headcounts. The agency shall be responsible for ensuring that "Vacancy Funding" is used to increase headcounts and not for promotions, title changes, in-range salary adjustments, or any other mechanism for increasing salaries for current employees.

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 headcounts without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the appropriated level. Unless specifically noted, all Fiscal Year



2025 escalated headcounts have been accounted for and shall be converted to authorized time-limited headcounts.

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.

If the agency's total authorized headcount decreases from Fiscal Year 2025 to Fiscal Year 2026, it will be the agency's discretion as to what headcounts are removed.

The Legislature authorized seven (7) new headcounts, which are included in the authorized headcount above for Fiscal Year 2026.

New Headcount Authorized:

Forestry Job Family Classification - 13

**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
<u>Performance Measures</u>	<u>Target</u>
Forest Protection & Information	
Average Suppression Time (Hrs from	
Detection to Control)	2.00
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



168 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their  
169 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally  
170 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for  
171 actions contrary to this provision.

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

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

