

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

To: Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 14

1 AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING
2 THE EXPENSES OF THE STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
3 FOR THE FISCAL 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, to the State Soil and Water
8 Conservation Commission for the purpose of defraying the
9 administrative expenses of the commission and carrying out the
10 provisions of Section 69-27-1 et seq., Mississippi Code of 1972,
11 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending
12 June 30, 2026.....\$ 566,583.00.

13 **SECTION 2.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
14 necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the special fund in
15 the State Treasury to the credit of the State Soil and Water
16 Conservation Commission which is comprised of special source funds
17 collected by or otherwise available to the commission, for the



18 purpose of defraying the expenses of the commission for the fiscal
19 year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....
20\$ 44,274,797.00.

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

26 FUNDING:

27	General Funds:	\$ 566,583.00
28	Special Funds:	\$ 498,997.00
29	Total Funds:	\$ 1,065,580.00

30 PERSONAL SERVICES:

31	Employee Salaries, Wages, and	
32	Fringe Benefits:	\$ 971,470.00
33	Progressions:	\$ 0.00
34	Vacancy Funding:	\$ 94,110.00
35	Total Personal Services:	\$ 1,065,580.00

36 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

37	Permanent:	9
38	Time-Limited:	6

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



43 It is the intention of the Legislature to ensure compliance
44 with the Variable Compensation Plan, as outlined in Section
45 25-9-147, Mississippi Code of 1972. Payment from these funds shall
46 be in accordance with the Variable Compensation Plan promulgated
47 by the Mississippi State Personnel Board. It is the Legislature's
48 intention that no employee's salary falls below the minimum salary
49 established by the Mississippi State Personnel Board.

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

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

64 If, at the time the agency takes any action to change
65 "Personal Services," the State Personnel Board determines that the
66 agency has taken or will take an action that would cause the
67 agency to exceed the funds appropriated in this act when



68 annualized for Fiscal Year 2026 or increase the need for "Personal
69 Services" for Fiscal Year 2027, when annualized, the State
70 Personnel Board shall process no salary actions until such time as
71 the requirements of the provisions of this section are met with
72 the exception of new hires determined to be essential for the
73 agency.

74 When used in this section, "Vacancy Funding" shall mean funds
75 included in the Total Personal Services amount listed above and
76 designated for approved vacancies in Fiscal Year 2026. These funds
77 are to be utilized to increase the number of filled headcounts
78 that were authorized but unfilled as of the last day of Fiscal
79 Year 2025. If the agency fills additional headcounts after May 1,
80 2025, until the end of Fiscal Year 2025, the amount of available
81 Vacancy Funding may be proportionally reduced to reflect the
82 updated number of filled headcounts. The agency shall be
83 responsible for ensuring that "Vacancy Funding" is used to
84 increase headcounts and not for promotions, title changes,
85 in-range salary adjustments, or any other mechanism for increasing
86 salaries for current employees.

87 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with
88 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or
89 allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State
90 Personnel Board shall not escalate positions without written
91 approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The
92 Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written



93 approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or headcounts
94 without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the
95 appropriated level. Unless specifically noted, all Fiscal Year
96 2025 escalated headcounts have been accounted for and shall be
97 converted to authorized time-limited headcounts.

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

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

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

109 **SECTION 4.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
110 State Soil and Water Conservation Commission shall maintain
111 complete accounting and personnel records related to the
112 expenditure of all funds appropriated under this act and that such
113 records shall be in the same format and level of detail as
114 maintained for Fiscal Year 2025. It is further the intention of
115 the Legislature that the agency's budget request for Fiscal Year
116 2027 shall be submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee
117 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. The State Soil and Water Conservation Commission is authorized to retain all funds generated from the sale of equipment. Any funds made available from the sale of equipment shall be deposited into the special fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and shall be used solely for the purpose of purchasing equipment.

SECTION 6. The State Soil and Water Conservation Commission is authorized to receive, budget and expend any proceeds derived from the sale of bonds authorized in Section 69-27-331 et seq., Mississippi Code of 1972. All expenditures shall be in accordance with conditions provided in Section 69-27-331 et seq., Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION 7. 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 8. 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



143 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their
144 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally
145 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for
146 actions contrary to this provision.

147 **SECTION 9.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
148 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the
149 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
150 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal
151 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
152 proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

153 **SECTION 10.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
154 and after July 1, 2025.

