

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

To: Appropriations B;
Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 1791

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 2025.

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 Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks for the fiscal
9 year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....
10\$ 9,663,903.00.

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, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....



19\$ 73,726,167.00.

20 The following sum, which is included in the sum appropriated
21 above in this section, is appropriated out of the state excise
22 taxes upon gasoline, oil and other petroleum products to the
23 Fisheries and Wildlife Fund for the fiscal year beginning
24 July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....\$ 5,750,000.00.

25 The Department of Revenue is directed to set aside the amount
26 of this appropriation or any part thereof at any time it sees fit,
27 out of any collections of taxes upon gasoline, oil and other
28 petroleum products, and to deduct the amounts so set aside from
29 such funds before making distribution thereof. However,
30 provisions shall first be made for the Highway Bonds Sinking Fund,
31 as required under the provisions of Chapter 130, Laws of 1938, and
32 any amendments thereto, and Section 27-5-101, Mississippi Code of
33 1972.

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

39 **SECTION 3.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of
40 Section 2 to the Bureau of Wildlife and Fisheries, funds in the
41 amount of One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Three Hundred
42 Thirty-five Dollars (\$125,335.00) shall be derived from the
43 Education Enhancement Fund deposited pursuant to Sections 27-65-75



44 and 27-67-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, for the purpose of
45 defraying the expenses of Project WILD for Fiscal Year 2025.

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

48 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

49 Permanent: 527

50 Time-Limited: 53

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 2026 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2025 funds
54 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are
55 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 budget by the Mississippi
56 Legislature. The Legislature shall determine the agency's personal
57 services appropriation, which the State Personnel Board shall
58 publish. In accordance with applicable laws, if an agency
59 determines that its personal services amount is insufficient, the
60 agency must contact the State Personnel Board. Any adjustment to
61 the personal services amount must be approved by the State
62 Personnel Director and the State Fiscal Officer after consultation
63 with the Legislative Budget Office. Any adjustment shall be
64 reported to the Legislative Budget Office and the House and Senate
65 Appropriations Chairmen. The agency's personal services
66 appropriation may consist of restricted funds for approved
67 vacancies for Fiscal Year 2025 that may not be utilized for active
68 Fiscal Year 2024 headcount. It shall be the agency's



69 responsibility to ensure that the funds provided for vacancies are
70 used to increase headcount and not for promotions, title changes,
71 in-range salary adjustments, or any other mechanism for increasing
72 salaries for current employees. If the State Personnel Board
73 determines that an agency has used provided vacancy funds for any
74 of the mechanisms previously listed, the State Personnel Board
75 shall not process any additional salary actions for the agency in
76 the current fiscal year, except for new hires determined by the
77 State Personnel Board to be essential for the agency. It is the
78 Legislature's intention that no employee salary falls below the
79 minimum salary established by the Mississippi State Personnel
80 Board.

81 Additionally, the State Personnel Board shall determine and
82 publish the projected annualized payroll costs based on current
83 employees. It shall be the responsibility of the agency head to
84 ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025 do
85 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If
86 the agency's projected cost for Fiscal Year 2025 exceeds the
87 annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the
88 State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be
89 essential for the agency.

90 Any transfers or escalations shall be made in accordance with
91 the terms, conditions, and procedures established by law or
92 allowable under the terms set forth within this act. The State
93 Personnel Board shall not escalate positions without written



94 approval from the Department of Finance and Administration. The
95 Department of Finance and Administration shall not provide written
96 approval to escalate any funds for salaries and/or positions
97 without proof of availability of new or additional funds above the
98 appropriated level.

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

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

107 **SECTION 5.** Each conservation officer and supervisor shall be
108 furnished an allowance for uniforms not to exceed Five Hundred
109 Fifty Dollars (\$550.00) per annum.

110 Provided further, when any personnel of the Bureau of
111 Wildlife and Fisheries are transferred from one (1) county to
112 another on a permanent assignment, the expense monies now paid on
113 out-of-county duty shall not be applicable.

114 **SECTION 6.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
115 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall maintain
116 complete accounting and personnel records related to the
117 expenditure of all funds appropriated under this act and that such
118 records shall be in the same format and level of detail as



119 maintained for Fiscal Year 2024. It is further the intention of
 120 the Legislature that the agency's budget request for Fiscal Year
 121 2026 shall be submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee
 122 in a format and level of detail comparable to the format and level
 123 of detail provided during the Fiscal Year 2025 budget request
 124 process.

125 **SECTION 7.** In compliance with the "Mississippi Performance
 126 Budget and Strategic Planning Act of 1994," it is the intent of
 127 the Legislature that the funds provided herein shall be utilized
 128 in the most efficient and effective manner possible to achieve the
 129 intended mission of this agency. Based on the funding authorized,
 130 this agency shall make every effort to attain the targeted
 131 performance measures provided below:

| | FY2025 |
|---|---------------|
| <u>Performance Measures</u> | <u>Target</u> |
| 134 Support Services | |
| 135 Number of Hunting and Fishing Licenses Sold | 480,000 |
| 136 Number of Registrations of Boats | 52,000 |
| 137 Percent Change in License Sales | 1.00 |
| 138 Fisheries | |
| 139 Number of Fish Stocked for Public Waters | 1,500,000 |
| 140 Number of Customers of DWFP Lakes | 1,500,000 |
| 141 Number of Participants in Aquatic Education | 1,500,000 |
| 142 Number of Access Facilities Built or | |
| 143 Maintained (Boat Ramps) | 35 |



| | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 144 | Wildlife | |
| 145 | MDWFP Management for Hunters and | |
| 146 | Non-Consumptive Users (Man-Days) | 125,000 |
| 147 | Research Projects Conducted to Sustain | |
| 148 | Healthy and Abundant Wildlife | |
| 149 | Populations | 6.00 |
| 150 | Acres of Forest Inventory | 1,000 |
| 151 | Acres of Prescribed Burning, Waterfowl | |
| 152 | Management, and Timber Management on | |
| 153 | WMA's to Sustain Healthy & Abundant | |
| 154 | Wildlife | 30,00 |
| 155 | Percent Change in Number of Research | |
| 156 | Projects Conducted to Sustain Healthy | |
| 157 | and Abundant Wildlife Populations | 0.00 |
| 158 | Percent Change in Number of Private Land | |
| 159 | Acres Influenced | 0.00 |
| 160 | Percent Change in the Number of Forest | |
| 161 | Inventories Conducted | 0.00 |
| 162 | Law Enforcement | |
| 163 | Number of Hunter Education Participants | 10,000 |
| 164 | Number of Hours Patrolled on Land | 175,000 |
| 165 | Number of Hours Patrolled on Water | 50,000 |
| 166 | Number of Criminal Investigations Conducted | 8,000 |
| 167 | Number of Shooting Sport Programs | 1,500 |
| 168 | Number of Boating Accidents | 50 |



| | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 169 | Number of Boating Fatalities | 7 |
| 170 | Cost per Student for Hunter Education | 50 |
| 171 | Cost per Sports Program | 525.00 |
| 172 | Percent Change in Number of Boating | |
| 173 | Accidents | 50.00 |
| 174 | Percent Change in Boating Related Fatalities | 50.00 |
| 175 | Percent Change in Public Contacts per | |
| 176 | Officer/per Day | 15.00 |
| 177 | Special Projects | |
| 178 | Percent Increase in Improved Use of | |
| 179 | Special Funds | 0.20 |
| 180 | Parks | |
| 181 | Overnight Accommodation (Cabins/Motels) | 250,000 |
| 182 | Overnight Accommodations (Camping) | 650,000 |
| 183 | Day Use Services | 400,000 |
| 184 | Percent Change in Day Use Services | 10.00 |
| 185 | Percent Change in the Prior Year of | |
| 186 | Occupancy Rate of Cabins | 25.00 |
| 187 | Museum | |
| 188 | Statewide Education Programming | 250,000 |
| 189 | Total Public Programming | 130,000 |
| 190 | Number of Visitors to Exhibits | 80,000 |
| 191 | Number of Natural Heritage Records Entered | 60,000 |
| 192 | Percent Change of Students that | |
| 193 | Understand the Importance of Natural | |



194 Resource Conservation 5.00

195 Percent Change of Visitors to Exhibits 3.00

196 A reporting of the degree to which the performance targets
197 set above have been or are being achieved shall be provided in the
198 agency's budget request submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget
199 Committee for Fiscal Year 2026.

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

205 **SECTION 9.** Of the funds appropriated within this act, the
206 Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks may enter into
207 cooperative agreements with the board of supervisors of any county
208 or any group or combination of counties for the purpose of
209 creating, improving or restoring parks, public game and fish
210 habitat lying or to be situated wholly or partially within such
211 county or in an adjoining county; and each county is empowered and
212 authorized, in its discretion, to expend funds from the general
213 county fund for such purposes from which fund they shall reimburse
214 to the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks the actual cost
215 of all surveying and engineering projects incurred by the
216 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks incidental thereto.
217 Such boards of supervisors are further authorized and empowered,
218 in their discretion, to enter into agreements necessary to carry



219 out the purposes of this act with any other county, the United
220 States Forest Service or any other agency if same should be
221 necessary for the acquisition of land by lease or otherwise for
222 such purposes.

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

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

232 **SECTION 11.** In order to be in compliance with Section
233 63-1-201 et seq., funds are herein provided and may be expended by
234 the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks to pay the costs
235 of commercial driver's licenses for specific employees and/or to
236 reimburse such costs for specific employees who, in the course of
237 their duties and responsibilities, are required to hold a valid
238 Mississippi Commercial Driver's License.

239 **SECTION 12.** The Mississippi Department of Wildlife,
240 Fisheries and Parks is authorized to provide financial support of
241 One Hundred Seventy-five Thousand Dollars (\$175,000.00) and to
242 enter into an agreement with the Mississippi Cooperative Extension
243 Service for a project specialist and related supportive cost.



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

247 **SECTION 14.** It is the intention of the Legislature that
248 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the
249 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things
250 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,
251 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind
252 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to
253 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are
254 made without competitive bids.

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

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

264 **SECTION 17.** Of the funds appropriated herein, Two Hundred
265 Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) may be provided to fund the Youth
266 Participation Initiative for the purpose of educating children in
267 the areas of hunting, fishing, conservation, and safety.



268 **SECTION 18.** The fund created pursuant to Section 49-5-21,
269 Mississippi Code of 1972, and known as the "Fisheries and Wildlife
270 Fund" shall be treated as a special trust fund. All funds derived
271 from the sale of licenses, fees, fines and other revenues received
272 by the department as provided by law, shall be deposited in the
273 Fisheries and Wildlife Fund. In addition, revenue derived from
274 the sale of timber on wildlife management areas, refuges and
275 preserves shall be deposited into an account established for such
276 revenues under the Fisheries and Wildlife Fund. The interest and
277 any investment income earned on the fund shall be credited by the
278 State Treasurer to the Fisheries and Wildlife Fund and shall not
279 be paid into the General Fund. Any unexpended funds remaining in
280 the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse and shall
281 remain in the fund. Nothing in this section shall prevent the use
282 of said funds from maintenance and upgrade of wildlife management
283 areas.

284 **SECTION 19.** It is the intention of the Legislature that no
285 more than One Million Three Hundred Thousand Dollars
286 (\$1,300,000.00) be expended from the Motor Vehicle Fund for the
287 purchase of any type of motor vehicle.

288 **SECTION 20.** The executive director of the Department of
289 Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks is authorized to enter into an
290 agreement with any public or private entities to manage any park
291 or parks within the state park system.



292 **SECTION 21.** It is the intent of the Legislature that no
293 state-owned wildlife management area be closed and that to the
294 greatest practicable extent, department land management decisions
295 and actions may not result in any net loss of any acreage
296 available for hunting opportunities that existed on July 1, 2006,
297 as provided in Section 49-5-99(4). It is the intention of the
298 Legislature that no state park be closed without legislative
299 approval.

300 **SECTION 22.** It is the intent of the Legislature that the
301 Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall have
302 the authority to enter into multi-year contracts for the purpose
303 of placing a sign on such state park property under the
304 department's domain, in accordance with any applicable rules and
305 regulations. All proceeds generated from these activities shall
306 remain with the department and shall be deposited into the proper
307 special fund.

308 **SECTION 23.** It is the intent of the Legislature that from
309 the funds available to the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and
310 Parks, the department may purchase and pay premium(s) on property
311 damage insurance on its motor vehicles, boats, trailers, real
312 property improvements, buildings, furnishings, and such other
313 assets as may be appropriate or practical, and/or as required by a
314 granting entity.

315 **SECTION 24.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions
316 of Section 2, One Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars



317 (\$1,750,000.00) shall be designated for the purpose of defraying
318 the operational expenses of Special Projects. None of these funds
319 shall be used for "Personal Services."

320 **SECTION 25.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
321 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks shall have the
322 authority to receive, budget and expend funds from the Gulf and
323 Wildlife Protection Fund, not to exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars
324 (\$50,000.00) for the purpose of preservation, protection,
325 conservation, and acquisition of waters, land and wildlife of this
326 state.

327 **SECTION 26.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
328 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with
329 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency
330 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their
331 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally
332 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for
333 actions contrary to this provision.

334 **SECTION 27.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1, it is
335 the intention of the Legislature that Fifty-eight Thousand Five
336 Hundred Ninety-three Dollars (\$58,593.00) may be allocated for the
337 Hunter Education program supported from the General Fund court
338 assessments.

339 **SECTION 28.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
340 necessary, is reappropriated out of any money in the Capital
341 Expense Fund not otherwise appropriated for the Department of



342 Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks the purpose of reauthorizing the
343 expenditure of Capital Expense Funds, as authorized in HB 1617,
344 2023 Regular Session. The purpose of these funds is to assist the
345 Department with improving and developing the area in the LeFleur's
346 Bluff Education and Tourism Complex and in coordination with the
347 Mississippi Children's Museum, and the Department of Finance and
348 Administration in order to promote tourism, education, and
349 recreational activity that contributes to community well-being for
350 the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025..
351\$ 13,000,000.00.

352 Notwithstanding the amount reappropriated under this section,
353 the amount that may be expended under the authority of this
354 section, shall not exceed the unexpended balance of the funds
355 remaining as of June 30, 2024, from the amount authorized for the
356 previous fiscal year. In addition, this reappropriation shall not
357 change the purpose for which the funds were originally authorized.

358 **SECTION 29.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
359 necessary, is reappropriated out of any money in the Capital
360 Expense Fund not otherwise appropriated for the Department of
361 Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks the purpose of reauthorizing the
362 expenditure of Capital Expense Funds, as authorized in HB 1617,
363 2023 Regular Session for the purpose of providing equipment for
364 the agency for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending
365 June 30, 2025.....\$ 1,100,000.00.



366 Notwithstanding the amount reappropriated under this section,
367 the amount that may be expended under the authority of this
368 section, shall not exceed the unexpended balance of the funds
369 remaining as of June 30, 2024, from the amount authorized for the
370 previous fiscal year. In addition, this reappropriation shall not
371 change the purpose for which the funds were originally authorized.

372 **SECTION 30.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 2, Eight
373 Million One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$8,100,000.00) may be
374 provided from the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund.
375 These funds are available for completing projects awarded to the
376 Department by the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Outdoor
377 Stewardship Trust Fund.

378 **SECTION 31.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
379 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the
380 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
381 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal
382 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
383 proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

384 **SECTION 32.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
385 and after July 1, 2024, and shall stand repealed June 30, 2024.

