

REPORT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MR. SPEAKER AND MR. PRESIDENT:

We, the undersigned conferees, have had under consideration the amendments to the following entitled BILL:

H. B. No. 1780: Appropriation; Forestry Commission.

We, therefore, respectfully submit the following report and recommendation:

- 1. That the Senate recede from its Amendment No. 1.
- 2. That the House and Senate adopt the following amendment:

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 State Forestry Commission for the fiscal year beginning
9 July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....
10\$ 17,347,147.00.

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, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....\$ 14,220,094.00.

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

20 AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

21 Permanent: 326

22 Time-Limited: 7

23 With the funds herein appropriated, it shall be the agency's
24 responsibility to make certain that funds required for Personal
25 Services for Fiscal Year 2026 do not exceed Fiscal Year 2025 funds
26 appropriated for that purpose unless programs or positions are
27 added to the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 budget by the Mississippi
28 Legislature. The Legislature shall determine the agency's
29 personal services appropriation, which the State Personnel Board
30 shall publish. The agency's personal services appropriation may
31 consist of restricted funds for approved vacancies for Fiscal Year
32 2025 that may be utilized to fill vacant Fiscal Year 2024
33 headcount. It shall be the agency's responsibility to ensure that
34 the funds provided for vacancies are used to increase headcount
35 and not for promotions, title changes, in-range salary adjustments
36 or any other mechanism for increasing salaries for current
37 employees. It is the Legislature's intention that no employee
38 salary falls below the minimum salary established by the
39 Mississippi State Personnel Board.

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

43 ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025 do
44 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If
45 the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 projected cost exceeds the
46 annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the
47 State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be
48 essential for the agency.

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

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

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

66 With the funds appropriated herein, it shall be the agency's
67 responsibility to ensure that no employee in a job classification

68 with a minimum salary of \$70,000 or greater shall receive an
69 in-range adjustment through progression, equity, or immediate
70 labor market increases.

71 **SECTION 4.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
72 State Forestry Commission shall maintain complete accounting and
73 personnel records related to the expenditure of all funds
74 appropriated under this act and that such records shall be in the
75 same format and level of detail as maintained for Fiscal Year
76 2024. It is further the intention of the Legislature that the
77 agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2026 shall be submitted to
78 the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format and level of
79 detail comparable to the format and level of detail provided
80 during the Fiscal Year 2025 budget request process.

81 **SECTION 5.** In compliance with the "Mississippi Performance
82 Budget and Strategic Planning Act of 1994," it is the intent of
83 the Legislature that the funds provided herein shall be utilized
84 in the most efficient and effective manner possible to achieve the
85 intended mission of this agency. Based on the funding authorized,
86 this agency shall make every effort to attain the targeted
87 performance measures provided below:

	FY2025
<u>Performance Measures</u>	<u>Target</u>
Forest Protection & Information	
Average Suppression Time (Hrs from	
Detection to Control)	2.00

93	Number of Acres Burned Under a	
94	Prescribed Burn Program	15,000
95	Percent of Fires Suppressed at 100 Acres	
96	or Less	95.00
97	Forest Management	
98	Forest Resource Development Program	
99	Acres Regenerated or Improved	35,000
100	Acres Monitored for Insect, Storm or Disease	19,800,000
101	Re-Inventory 20% of State's Forest Lands	
102	(% of Regions)	20.00
103	Percent Increase of Re-Inventory of	
104	State Forest Land	20.00

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

109 **SECTION 6.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 2, it is the
110 intention of the Legislature that Two Hundred Thousand Dollars
111 (\$200,000.00) shall be transferred to the Department of
112 Agriculture and Commerce for the Beaver Control or Eradication
113 Program during the Fiscal Year 2025.

114 **SECTION 7.** Any funds in the Salary, Wages and Fringe
115 Benefits major object of expenditure may be used to purchase
116 accumulated compensatory time within the funds available.

117 **SECTION 8.** It is the intention of the Legislature that
118 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the
119 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things
120 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,
121 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind
122 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to
123 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are
124 made without competitive bids.

125 **SECTION 9.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
126 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with
127 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency
128 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their
129 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally
130 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for
131 actions contrary to this provision.

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

138 **SECTION 11.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
139 and after July 1, 2024.

**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 STATE FORESTRY COMMISSION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR
3 2025.

CONFEREES FOR THE HOUSE

X (SIGNED)
Bounds

X (SIGNED)
Read

X (SIGNED)
Pigott

CONFEREES FOR THE SENATE

X (SIGNED)
Hopson

X (SIGNED)
McCaughn

X (SIGNED)
Thompson