

**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. 1784: Appropriation; Oil and Gas Board.

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 special fund in  
7 the State Treasury to the credit of the State Oil and Gas Board  
8 which is comprised of special source funds collected by or  
9 otherwise available to the department, for the purpose of  
10 defraying the expenses of the department for the fiscal year  
11 beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.....  
12 .....\$           4,987,969.00.

13           **SECTION 2.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of  
14 Section 1, the following positions are authorized:

15           AUTHORIZED HEADCOUNT:

16	Permanent:	Full Time.....	35
17	Time-Limited:	Full Time.....	0

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

35           Additionally, the State Personnel Board shall determine and  
36 publish the projected annualized payroll costs based on current  
37 employees. It shall be the responsibility of the agency head to  
38 ensure that actual personnel expenditures for Fiscal Year 2025 do  
39 not exceed the data provided by the Legislative Budget Office. If  
40 the agency's Fiscal Year 2025 projected cost exceeds the  
41 annualized costs, no salary actions shall be processed by the

42 State Personnel Board except for new hires determined to be  
43 essential for the agency.

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

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

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

61 **SECTION 3.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the  
62 State Oil and Gas Board shall maintain complete accounting and  
63 personnel records related to the expenditure of all funds  
64 appropriated under this act and that such records shall be in the  
65 same format and level of detail as maintained for Fiscal Year  
66 2024. It is further the intention of the Legislature that the

67 agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2026 shall be submitted to  
68 the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format and level of  
69 detail comparable to the format and level of detail provided  
70 during the Fiscal Year 2025 budget request process.

71 **SECTION 4.** The State Oil and Gas Board shall have the  
72 authority to receive, budget and expend funds from any source not  
73 to exceed Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) for the  
74 Comprehensive Data Management Program in accordance with rules and  
75 regulations of the Department of Finance and Administration in a  
76 manner consistent with the escalation of federal funds.

77 **SECTION 5.** Of the funds appropriated under the provisions of  
78 Section 1, One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars  
79 (\$1,500,000.00), or so much thereof as may necessary, shall be  
80 derived out of any money in the State Treasury to the credit of  
81 the Emergency Plugging Fund, as created in Section 53-1-77,  
82 Mississippi Code of 1972, and allocated in a manner as determined  
83 by the State Treasurer. These funds are provided to plug,  
84 remediate, and restore well project sites that are outside the  
85 scope of the Federal Orphan Well Plugging Program.

86 **SECTION 6.** It is the intention of the Legislature that  
87 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the  
88 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things  
89 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,  
90 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind  
91 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to

92 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are  
93 made without competitive bids.

94         **SECTION 7.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the  
95 funds herein appropriated shall be expended in compliance with  
96 Section 27-104-25, Mississippi Code of 1972, that no state agency  
97 shall incur obligations or indebtedness in excess of their  
98 appropriation and that the responsible officers, either personally  
99 or upon their official bonds, shall be held responsible for  
100 actions contrary to this provision.

101         **SECTION 8.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
102 and after July 1, 2024.

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

1         AN ACT APPROVING THE EXPENDITURE OF SPECIAL FUNDS FOR THE  
2 PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING THE EXPENSES OF THE STATE OIL AND GAS BOARD  
3 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2025.

CONFEREES FOR THE HOUSE

CONFEREES FOR THE SENATE

X (SIGNED)  
Bounds

X (SIGNED)  
Hopson

X (SIGNED)  
Read

X (SIGNED)  
McCaughn

X (SIGNED)  
Hale

X (SIGNED)  
Tate