2023 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB6001 (Enrolled)

Bill Order » Office of Agriculture and Forestry » Item 108

Department of Forestry

Item 108	First Year - FY2023	Second Year - FY2024
Forest Management (50100)	**$44,618,537**	**$39,041,707**
Reforestation Incentives to Private Forest Land Owners (50102)	$4,345,039	$4,345,039
Forest Conservation, Wildfire &Watershed Services (50103)	$29,810,876	$28,169,476
Tree Restoration and Improvement, Nurseries &State-Owned Forest Lands (50104)	$8,562,622	$5,627,192
Financial Assistance for Forest Land Management (50105)	$1,900,000	$900,000
Fund Sources:		
General	$28,624,159	$23,047,329
Special	$11,507,463	$11,507,463
Trust and Agency	$21,000	$21,000
Dedicated Special Revenue	$175,762	$175,762
Federal Trust	$4,290,153	$4,290,153

Authority: Title 10.1, Chapter 11, and Title 58.1, Chapter 32, Article 4, Code of Virginia.

A. The State Forester is hereby authorized to utilize any unobligated balances in the fire suppression fund authorized by § 10.1-1124, Code of Virginia, for the purpose of acquiring replacement equipment for forestry management and protection operations.

B. In the event that budgeted amounts for forest fire suppression are insufficient to meet forest fire suppression demands, such amounts as may be necessary for this purpose may be transferred from Item 485 of this act to the Department of Forestry, with the approval of the Director, Department of Planning and Budget.

C. The department shall provide technical assistance and project supervision in the aerial spraying of herbicides on timberland on landowner property. In addition to recovering the direct cost associated with the spraying contract, the department may charge an administrative fee for this service.

D. The Department of Forestry, in cooperation with the Department of Corrections, shall continue the use of inmate labor for routine and special work projects in state forests.

E. The appropriation in Reforestation Incentives to Private Forest Land Owners includes $1,945,239 the first year and $1,945,239 the second year from the general fund for the Reforestation of Timberlands Program. This appropriation shall be deemed sufficient to meet the provisions of Titles 10.1 and 58.1, Code of Virginia.

F. Out of this appropriation, $2,126,126 the first year and $2,126,126 the second year from the general fund is

included for the purchase of forest fire protection equipment through the state's master equipment lease purchase program.

G. The department is authorized to enter into agreements with private entities for the active operational life of the tower located at 900 Natural Resources Drive in Albemarle County, Virginia. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any revenues received from such agreements shall be retained by the department and used for forest land management.

H.1. The State Comptroller shall continue the Virginia State Forest Mitigation and Acquisition Fund and the Long Term Mitigation Fund as established in Item 102, Chapter 806, 2013 Acts of Assembly. All moneys in these funds shall be used as provided for in this Item and in Item 102, Chapter 806, 2013 Acts of Assembly, and Item 98, Chapter 665, 2015 Acts of Assembly.

2.a. With the exception of the amounts prescribed in paragraph H.2.b. of this item, the Virginia State Forest Mitigation and Acquisition Fund shall be used solely for forest land or conservation easement acquisition.

b. The Long Term Mitigation Fund shall be used solely for long term management of the Cumberland State Forest Stream Buffer Preservation Stewardship Plan.

3. For any such future mitigation projects, no state forest land shall be used to provide compensatory mitigation for wetland or stream impacts of any public or private project until such time as due consideration has been given to the availability of mitigation credits available from private sources. State forest land means all sites, roadways, game food patches, ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, beaches, and lakes to which the Department of Forestry holds title for use, development, and administration.

I. The department is authorized to sell properties and timber located at the following: 16520 Five Forks Road, Amelia, Virginia, 23002; 26401 Blue Star Highway, Emporia, Virginia, 23847; 11260 Jessie Dupont Memorial Highway, Kilmarnock, Virginia, 22482; 152 Maury River Road, Lexington, Virginia, 24450; and 2080 Sowers Road NE, Floyd, Virginia, 24091. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the net proceeds of these transactions shall be deposited into the general fund.

J. Out of this appropriation, $100,000 the first year and $100,000 the second year from the general fund is provided for the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute.

K. Out of this appropriation, $450,000 the first year and $450,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to increase bandwidth capacity at the agency's offices.

L. Out of the amounts in this item, $487,842 the first year and $487,482 the second year from the general fund is provided for a Hardwood Forest Habitat initiative.

M. Out of the amounts of this item, $1,000,000 the first year from the general fund shall be provided for the Forest Sustainability Fund established pursuant to § 58.1-3242.1, Code of Virginia.

N. The Department of Forestry, with assistance from the Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, shall prepare an assessment of the environmental benefits of Virginia's forests and its forest economy. This assessment shall include, but not be limited to, (i) the air quality benefits, including the sequestration of greenhouse gases, provided by Virginia's forests and timberlands; (ii) the economic activities that promote the growth and health of Virginia's forests and timberlands, including the use of active forest management and the production and use of products derived from forest resources; and, (iii) other such environmentally beneficial aspects of Virginia's forests, timberlands, and forest economy as the Department may identify. The Department shall present its findings to the Chairs of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Natural Resources

no later than December 1, 2022.