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## DIGEST

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HB 75 Original

2020 Second Extraordinary Session

McFarland

**Abstract:** Creates the "Wildfire Suppression Subfund" and provides for the disposition of monies allocated to the state general fund from the severance tax on timber to be deposited into the subfund for use by the La. Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) in forest fire suppression.

Present law creates the "Forest Protection Fund" within the state treasury and requires that monies collected from the forest protection assessment are deposited into the fund for the purpose of acquisition and maintenance of equipment used for the protection of forest lands from damage by fire or other causes. Present law requires that any unexpended or unencumbered monies in the fund at the end of the year revert to the La. Agricultural Finance Authority. Proposed law maintains present law but changes its placement.

Proposed law creates the "Wildfire Suppression Subfund" (subfund) within the "Forest Protection Fund" of the state treasury.

Proposed law requires funds equal to 25% of those allocated to the state portion of the severance tax on timber to be deposited into the state treasury.

Proposed law requires the state treasury to credit an amount equal to the proposed law into the subfund beginning with the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.

Proposed law requires LDAF to spend the monies in the subfund as appropriated by the legislature on fire suppression with an intent that the money is used for the appointment and retention of forest firefighters.

Proposed law requires the treasurer to invest the monies in the subfund in the same manner as monies in the state general fund and that any interest earned is credited back to the subfund. Proposed law requires that any unexpended or unencumbered monies in the subfund at the end of the fiscal year remain in the subfund.

Proposed law prohibits any money appropriated under the Forest Protection Fund and Wildfire Suppression Subfund from displacing, replacing, or supplanting appropriations from the state general fund for LDAF for any purpose for which a general fund appropriation was made in the previous year unless the total appropriations for the fiscal year from the state general fund for such purpose exceed general fund appropriations for the previous year.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 3:4321(C) and (D); Adds R.S. 3:4321(E))