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## DIGEST

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HB 75 Engrossed

2020 Second Extraordinary Session

McFarland

**Abstract:** Creates the "Wildfire Suppression Subfund" (Wildfire 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. Requires monies deposited into the Forest Protection Fund be used for acquisition and maintenance of equipment used for the protection of forest lands from damage by fire or other causes. Proposed law creates the Wildfire Subfund within the Forest Protection Fund and exempts monies in the Wildfire Subfund from the uses mandated for the Forest Protection Fund.

Present law requires that any unexpended or unencumbered monies in the Forest Protection Fund at the end of the year revert to the La. Agricultural Finance Authority. Proposed law retains present law but exempts monies in the Wildfire Subfund from this reversion.

Present law levies an annual assessment of eight cents per acre on each acre of timberland in the state. Requires the assessment to be deposited into the Forest Protection Fund. Proposed law retains present law.

Proposed law requires the state treasury to credit an amount equal to 25% of the severance tax on timber allocated to the state pursuant to Article VII, Section 4(D) into the Wildfire Subfund beginning with the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.

Proposed law requires LDAF to spend the monies in the Wildfire 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 provides that monies in the Wildfire Subfund be invested in the same manner as monies in the state general fund and that any interest earned is credited to the subfund. Proposed law requires that any unexpended or unencumbered monies in the Wildfire Subfund at the end of the fiscal year remain in the subfund.

Proposed law prohibits any money appropriated from the Forest Protection Fund and Wildfire 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))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Appropriations to the original bill:

1. Exclude unexpended and unencumbered monies in the subfund created pursuant to proposed law from being transferred to the La. Agricultural Finance Authority at the end of each year.
2. Exempt monies in the subfund created pursuant to proposed law from present law uses for the Forest Protection Fund.