

## RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 714 (HB 762)

2022 Regular Session

Zeringue

New law creates the La. Outdoors Forever Program for the purpose of providing funding for outdoor conservation projects within the state and establishes a special account within the Conservation Fund called the La. Outdoors Forever Fund for the purpose of funding the program.

New law provides that the La. Outdoors Forever Program will be governed by a project selection board and advised by technical advisory board.

New law provides that the project selection board will make all final decisions about which projects will be selected for funding. Further provides that the board will be made up of the following members:

- (1) The governor or his designee.
- (2) The executive assistant to the governor for coastal activities or his designee.
- (3) The lieutenant governor or his designee from the office of state parks.
- (4) The commissioner of the Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry or his designee.
- (5) The secretary of the Dept. of Environmental Quality or his designee.
- (6) The secretary of the Dept. of Natural Resources or his designee.
- (7) The secretary of the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries or his designee.
- (8) The speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee (nonvoting).
- (9) The president of the Senate or his designee (nonvoting).

New law provides that the technical advisory board will evaluate applications submitted to the program and provide recommendations to the project selection board. Specifies that the technical advisory board will consist of up to three representatives from nonprofit conservation groups in the state and subject matter representatives from the following:

- (1) The office of the governor.
- (2) The division of administration.
- (3) The office of coastal activities.
- (4) The office of state parks.
- (5) The Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry.
- (6) The Dept. of Environmental Quality.
- (7) The Dept. of Natural Resources.
- (8) The Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries.

New law provides that state and local government entities as well as nongovernmental organizations working in coordination with public agencies are eligible to apply to the program. Further specifies certain types of conservation projects that are eligible for funding under the program, including:

- (1) Land conservation of important natural areas, including fish and wildlife habitat.
- (2) Water quality projects related to land conservation or land management, including those lands that protect drinking water supplies.

- (3) Working land, farms, and forested land.
- (4) Recreational properties related to important natural areas and public use.
- (5) Historic properties adjacent to or integral to habitat restoration or enhancement.

New law provides that the program is strictly voluntary and does not invoke eminent domain.

New law requires the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries to promulgate rules implementing the program, including application procedures and project criteria and scoring to be used in evaluating applications. Further requires that applications and information about applying be provided online.

New law specifies that the program and all board activities will be subject to public meetings, public records, and ethics code requirements.

New law specifies that the program will sunset on July 1, 2033.

Existing law provides criteria for the designation of property as a state park, including a minimum size requirement. Existing law exempts state parks currently within the system from the size requirements.

New law also exempts state parks in Caddo and Bossier Parish from the size requirements for this designation.

Existing law provides for the offices and agencies within the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries.

New law adds the project selection board and the technical advisory board of the La. Outdoors Forever Program to the list of agencies within the department.

Effective upon governor's signature (June 18, 2022).

(Amends R.S. 56:1684(D)(1); Adds R.S. 36:610(B)(13) and R.S. 56:10(B)(17) and 1931-1936)