

Highlights of the Agriculture, Natural, and Economic Resources (AgNER) Budget

The Conference Budget for AgNER in FY 2022-23 includes net appropriations of \$770.1 million, which is \$35.7 million above the FY 2021-22 amount, a 4.9% increase. The highlights of the AgNER adjustments are as follows:

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS)

Committee Report Items (Pages D5 – D10)

- Provides additional funds to support the increased cost of operating the **Research Stations**. (\$737,000 R).
- Provides the Forest Service with funds to maintain and repair **emergency response equipment**, pay Forestry staff for overtime and on-call hours, and replace personal protective equipment used in fighting wildfires. (\$1.2 million R).
- Provides \$1 million R for both the **Forest Development Program** and **Prescribed Burning** for grants to assist landowners with forest management.

Department of Commerce (Commerce)

Committee Report Items (Pages D14 – D27)

- Provides an additional \$500,000 R and \$1 million NR to the **NC Biotechnology Center** for job training, and grants and loans. This is in addition to the \$1 million NR provided for FY 2022-23 in the 2021 Appropriations Act, for a total increase of \$2.5 million in FY 2022-23.
- Provides funds to **Economic Development Partnership of NC** to identify megasites for advanced manufacturing site selection searches. (\$1 million NR)

Special Provisions

- (Secs. 11.4-11.10, and Sec. 11.13) Appropriates \$876 million in funds from the Economic Development Project Reserve for various **economic development projects** across the State, including \$450 million NR for infrastructure improvements at the VinFast project site.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Committee Report Items (Pages D32 – D43)

- Provides funding for an **economic development liaison** to work the Department of Commerce on business recruitment (\$160,000 R).
- Provides \$1.3 million for seven positions and lab service agreements for testing related to **emerging compounds**, such as PFAS.
- Appropriates \$611.5 million for **water and wastewater grants** from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund and the Clean Water and Drinking Water Reserve. An additional \$223

million from federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Funding is also appropriated, making a total of \$863 million available for water and wastewater infrastructure grants in FY 2022-23. This is in addition to \$1.6 billion in water and wastewater funds appropriated in the 2021 Appropriations Act. Altogether, the amount available for water and wastewater infrastructure grants for the biennium is \$2.5 billion.

Department of Labor (Labor)

Special Provisions

- (Sec. 13.2) Conforms **Occupational Safety and Health penalties** to match federal minimum and maximum requirements.

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR)

Committee Report Items (Pages D54 – D61)

- Provides funds to implement the **America's 250th Anniversary** Wayside and Oral History program (\$92,231 R and \$200,000 NR).
- Provides additional funding for the **Symphony** for concerts in the western part of the State and for student transportation to Symphony events (\$1.2 million R).
- Replaces nonrecurring funds appropriated in the 2021 Appropriations Act for the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (**PARTF**) and the NC Land and Water Fund (**NCLWF**) with recurring funds. The revised recurring appropriations for both of these funds is \$24.2 million. The total amount available for grants from PARTF in FY 2022-23 is \$61.7 million, including \$37.5 million NR appropriated in the 2021 Appropriations Act. The total amount available for grants from NCLWF is \$64.7 million, including \$40.5 million NR appropriated in the 2021 Appropriations Act.

Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC)

Committee Report Items (Pages D65 – D68)

- Provides \$2 million NR to the **Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council** for the Go Outside Grant Program which provides grants to schools for outdoor learning opportunities.
- Provides funds for six temporary employees and operating costs to perform seasonal field sampling for **Chronic Wasting Disease** each year. (\$201,232 R, \$750,000 NR).