

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

The Conference Budget for AgNER in FY 2023-24 includes net appropriations of \$797 million, which is \$87 million above the base budget, a 12% increase. FY 2024-25 includes net appropriations of \$820.0 million, which is \$23.6 million more than FY 2023-24, a 3% increase. The highlights of the AgNER adjustments follow below.

### **Executive Summary**

Major highlights of the AgNER budget include \$2.8 billion over the biennium for water and sewer infrastructure projects, \$213.5 million over the biennium for parks, trails, and land preservation grants, and \$128.3 million for economic development.

## **Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS)**

### **DACS Committee Report Items**

- Provides \$5.9 million recurring for operating needs throughout the Department, including needs in Markets, Research Stations, Food and Drug, and the Veterinary divisions. (Items 9, 11, and 14, Page D9; Items 15, 17, 18, and 20, Page D10; and Item 23-24, Page D11)
- Provides \$6.0 million nonrecurring in both years of the biennium to be distributed equally among the 6 food banks in the State. Also provides \$100,000 each year to support administrative costs of the food banks. (Item 32, Page D12)
- Provides \$20.0 million nonrecurring in the first year for the Streamflow Rehabilitation and Assistance Program which supports the ongoing maintenance and restoration of streams across the State. (Item 43, Page D16)
- Provides \$10.0 million nonrecurring in the first year and \$15.0 million nonrecurring in the second year for Farmland Preservation. (Item 45, Page D17)

## **Department of Commerce (Commerce)**

### **Commerce Committee Report Items**

- Provides \$1.5 million recurring, and \$16.9 million nonrecurring in the first year and \$10.4 million nonrecurring in the second year for nonprofit organizations, including RTI International, the National Institute of Minority Economic Development, and the Carolina Small Business Development Fund. (Items 62-67 and 69, Pages D32-33)
- Provides \$10.0 million nonrecurring in the first year from the Economic Development Project Reserve to the Golden LEAF Foundation for a shell buildings pilot program. (Item 68, Page D33)

- Provides \$250.0 million nonrecurring in both years from the NCInnovation Reserve for NCInnovation, Inc., to establish an endowment fund to support commercialization of innovation from the State’s colleges and universities through a network of regional hubs and grant programs. (Item 70, Page D33, and Section 11.9 of the bill)
- Provides \$10.0 million nonrecurring in the first year and \$97.8 million nonrecurring in the second from the Economic Development Project Reserve for the Megsites Readiness Program. (Item 73, Page D39)
- Provides \$10.0 million nonrecurring in the second year from the Economic Development Project Reserve for the Selectsites Readiness Program. (Item 74, Page D39)

## **Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)**

### **DEQ Committee Report Items**

- Provides \$1.1 million recurring and \$7 million nonrecurring in both years for data modernization and permit transformation information technology projects. (Item 96, Page D 51 and Item 165, Page D67)
- Provides \$1.3 million recurring and \$500,000 nonrecurring in the first year to facilitate economic development throughout the State. (Item 99 and 102, Page D51, and Item 103, Page D52)
- Provides \$27.5 million nonrecurring in the first year and \$10.0 million nonrecurring in the second year for grants to coastal communities for resiliency and storm damage mitigation, as well as directed grants to the Coastal Federation for debris and vessel removal, living shoreline projects, and stormwater control measures. (Items 129-131, Page D 56; Item 152, Page D 63; and Item 167, Page D 67)
- Provides \$2.8 billion over the biennium for water and wastewater planning and infrastructure. This amount includes \$2.0 billion in new State funding and \$600.0 million in new federal funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, in addition to \$158.0 million already in the Base Budget. Specific allocations totaling \$1.9 billion are made to 83 counties. The remainder, including \$10.0 million for the Viable Utility Reserve and \$16 million for the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments (LASII) fund, will be distributed through the competitive grant process. (Items 170-172, Page D71; Items 179-181, page D75; Items 182-187, page D76; and Section 12.2 of the bill)

### **DEQ Special Provisions**

- Sections 12.11-12.14 modernize certain environmental permits by increasing fees and modifying processing timelines. Altogether, permit fee increases will generate approximately \$3.8 million for the continued support of permit processing and oversight staff throughout the Department.

## **Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR)**

### **DNCR Committee Report Items**

- Provides funds for a minimum level of staffing and regular exhibit updates throughout the State Historic Sites system. (Items 207-208, Page D95)
- Provides an additional \$7.6 million recurring and \$41.0 million nonrecurring in the first year and \$17.5 million nonrecurring in the second year for parks, trails, and land conservation grants. (Item 226, Page D97, Item 228, Page D98; Items 236-238, Page D100; and Item 245, Page D102)
- Provides an additional \$2.5 million recurring for Grassroots Arts Grants and an additional \$3.8 million recurring for State Aid to Public Libraries. (Items 219 and 221, Page D96)
- Provides \$11.6 million recurring and \$5.0 million nonrecurring for operating reserves at expanded or new parks and the Zoo's new Asia exhibit. (Items 224-225, Page D97)

## **Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC)**

### **WRC Committee Report Items**

- Provides funds to create 16 new Wildlife Officers. (Items 258, Page D111)