

Calendar No. 216

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION**S. 2440**

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain National Forest System land located in Franklin County, Mississippi, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 24, 2025

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

OCTOBER 27, 2025

Reported by Mr. BOOZMAN, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain National Forest System land located in Franklin County, Mississippi, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*

2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. OKHISSA LAKE RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOP-**

4 **MENT LAND CONVEYANCE.**

5 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

1 (1) ~~ALLIANCE.~~—The term “Alliance” means
2 the Scenic Rivers Development Alliance.

3 (2) ~~SECRETARY.~~—The term “Secretary” means
4 the Secretary of Agriculture.

5 (b) ~~REQUEST.~~—Subject to the requirements of this
6 section, if the Alliance submits a written request for con-
7 veyance by not later than 180 days after the date of enact-
8 ment of this Act and the Secretary determines that it is
9 in the public interest to convey the National Forest Sys-
10 tem land described in subsection (c), the Secretary shall
11 convey to the Alliance all right, title, and interest of the
12 United States in and to the National Forest System land
13 described in subsection (c) by quitclaim deed through a
14 public or private sale, including a competitive sale by auc-
15 tion or bid.

16 (c) ~~DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM~~
17 ~~LAND.~~—

18 (1) ~~IN GENERAL.~~—Subject to paragraph (2),
19 the National Forest System land referred to in sub-
20 section (b) is—

21 (A) the approximately 137.7 acres of real
22 property located in secs. 5 and 6, T. 5 N., R.
23 4 E., and sec. 31, T. 6 N., R. 4 E., Franklin
24 County, Mississippi, as depicted on the map
25 prepared for the Alliance by Marling Surveying,

1 LLC, entitled “Map of Survey of a 137.70 Acre
 2 Tract, a Portion of U.S. Department of Agri-
 3 culture Forest Service Homochitto National
 4 Forest Tracts H-41g & H-307”, and dated
 5 September 16, 2024; and

6 (B) the approximately 173 acres of real
 7 property located in secs. 5, 6, 7, and 8, T. 5
 8 N., R. 4 E., Franklin County, Mississippi, as
 9 depicted on the map prepared for the Alliance
 10 by Marling Surveying, LLC, entitled “Map of
 11 Survey of a +/- 173 Acre Tract, a Portion of
 12 U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service
 13 Homochitto National Forest Tracts H-1, H-
 14 3b, H-41g & H-307”, and dated September
 15 16, 2024.

16 (2) SURVEY.—The exact acreage and legal de-
 17 scription of the National Forest System land to be
 18 conveyed under this section shall be determined by
 19 a survey satisfactory to the Secretary.

20 (d) CONSIDERATION.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The consideration for the
 22 conveyance of any National Forest System land
 23 under this section shall be—

24 (A) provided in the form of cash; and

1 ~~(B)~~ in an amount equal to the fair market
 2 value of the National Forest System land being
 3 conveyed, as determined under paragraph ~~(2)~~.

4 ~~(2) FAIR MARKET VALUE DETERMINATION.—~~

5 The fair market value of the National Forest System
 6 land conveyed under this section shall be deter-
 7 mined—

8 ~~(A)~~ in the case of a method of conveyance
 9 described in subsection ~~(b)~~, by an appraisal that
 10 is—

11 ~~(i)~~ conducted in accordance with the
 12 Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal
 13 Land Acquisitions; and

14 ~~(ii)~~ approved by the Secretary; or

15 ~~(B)~~ in the case of a conveyance by a meth-
 16 od other than a method described in subsection
 17 ~~(b)~~, by competitive sale.

18 ~~(c) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—~~The conveyance
 19 under this section shall be subject to—

20 ~~(1)~~ valid existing rights; and

21 ~~(2)~~ such other terms and conditions as the Sec-
 22 retary considers to be appropriate to protect the in-
 23 terests of the United States.

24 ~~(f) PROCEEDS FROM SALE.—~~The Secretary shall de-
 25 posit the proceeds of the conveyance of any National For-

1 est System land under this section in the fund established
 2 under Public Law 90–171 (commonly known as the “Sisk
 3 Act”) (16 U.S.C. 484a).

4 (g) COSTS.—As a condition for the conveyance under
 5 this section, the Secretary shall require the Alliance to pay
 6 at closing—

7 (1) any reasonable appraisal costs; and

8 (2) the costs of any administrative or environ-
 9 mental analysis required by applicable law (including
 10 regulations).

11 **SECTION 1. OKHISSA LAKE RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOP-**
 12 **MENT LAND CONVEYANCE.**

13 (a) DEFINITIONS.—*In this section:*

14 (1) ALLIANCE.—*The term “Alliance” means the*
 15 *Scenic Rivers Development Alliance, an instrumen-*
 16 *tality of the State of Mississippi.*

17 (2) SECRETARY.—*The term “Secretary” means*
 18 *the Secretary of Agriculture.*

19 (b) CONVEYANCE.—*Subject to the requirements of this*
 20 *section, not later than 180 days after the completion of the*
 21 *appraisal under subsection (d)(2) and the written agree-*
 22 *ment under subsection (e)(2), the Secretary shall convey by*
 23 *quitclaim deed to the Alliance all right, title, and interest*
 24 *of the United States in and to the surface estate of the Na-*

1 *tional Forest System land generally described in subsection*
 2 *(c).*

3 *(c) LAND TO BE CONVEYED.—*

4 *(1) IN GENERAL.—The National Forest System*
 5 *land referred to in subsection (b) is—*

6 *(A) the approximately 137.7 acres of real*
 7 *property located in secs. 5 and 6, T. 5 N., R. 4*
 8 *E., and sec. 31, T. 6 N., R. 4 E., Franklin Coun-*
 9 *ty, Mississippi, as depicted on the map prepared*
 10 *for the Alliance by Marling Surveying, LLC, en-*
 11 *titled “Map of Survey of a 137.70 Acre Tract, a*
 12 *Portion of U.S. Department of Agriculture For-*
 13 *est Service Homochitto National Forest Tracts*
 14 *H-41g & H-307”, and dated September 16,*
 15 *2024; and*

16 *(B) the approximately 173 acres of real*
 17 *property located in secs. 5, 6, 7, and 8, T. 5 N.,*
 18 *R. 4 E., Franklin County, Mississippi, as de-*
 19 *icted on the map prepared for the Alliance by*
 20 *Marling Surveying, LLC, entitled “Map of Sur-*
 21 *vey of a +/- 173 Acre Tract, a Portion of U.S.*
 22 *Department of Agriculture Forest Service*
 23 *Homochitto National Forest Tracts H-1, H-3b,*
 24 *H-41g & H-307”, and dated September 16,*
 25 *2024.*

1 (2) *SURVEY.*—*The exact acreage and legal de-*
 2 *scription of the National Forest System land to be*
 3 *conveyed under this section shall be determined by a*
 4 *survey satisfactory to the Secretary.*

5 (d) *CONSIDERATION.*—*The consideration for the con-*
 6 *veyance of any National Forest System land under this sec-*
 7 *tion shall be—*

8 (1) *provided in the form of cash; and*

9 (2) *in an amount equal to the fair market value*
 10 *of the National Forest System land being conveyed, as*
 11 *determined by an appraisal conducted in accordance*
 12 *with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal*
 13 *Land Acquisitions and approved by the Secretary.*

14 (e) *TERMS AND CONDITIONS.*—*The conveyance under*
 15 *this section shall be subject to—*

16 (1) *valid existing rights;*

17 (2) *a written agreement entered into between the*
 18 *Secretary and the Alliance, under which the Alli-*
 19 *ance—*

20 (A) *agrees to cover the costs of upkeep and*
 21 *maintenance of the Okhissa Lake Dam, includ-*
 22 *ing the dam, spillway, and related water control*
 23 *facilities; and*

1 (B) assumes responsibility and liability for
 2 compliance with all Federal and State dam safe-
 3 ty laws and regulations;

4 (3) the reservations in the United States of ease-
 5 ments for public roads and trails, including—

6 (A) a perpetual, nonexclusive road right-of-
 7 way 30 feet in width for ingress and egress over
 8 all portions of Forest Service Road 149A within
 9 any of the conveyed land; and

10 (B) such road and trail rights-of-way as the
 11 Secretary may determine to be necessary or de-
 12 sirable to retain public and administrative ac-
 13 cess to Okhissa Lake and appurtenant National
 14 Forest System land;

15 (4) the reservation in the United States of all
 16 mineral rights, oil and gas rights, and all other sub-
 17 surface rights in the conveyed land;

18 (5) a right of re-entry reserving to the Secretary
 19 the right to retake possession and title to the conveyed
 20 land in the event the land is subsequently conveyed to
 21 a nonpublic entity or used for purposes other than
 22 public recreation and fish and wildlife habitat, sub-
 23 ject to the condition that, in the event the Secretary
 24 exercises such a right of re-entry, the Alliance shall

1 *remain liable for the abatement and clean-up of haz-*
 2 *ardous substances, oil, and any other contaminants;*

3 *(6) a restrictive covenant against the subdivision*
 4 *of the conveyed land into residential lots; and*

5 *(7) such other terms and conditions as the Sec-*
 6 *retary considers to be appropriate to protect the inter-*
 7 *ests of the United States.*

8 *(f) PROCEEDS FROM SALE.—*

9 *(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall deposit*
 10 *the proceeds of the conveyance of any National Forest*
 11 *System land under this section in the fund established*
 12 *under Public Law 90–171 (commonly known as the*
 13 *“Sisk Act”) (16 U.S.C. 484a).*

14 *(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts deposited under*
 15 *paragraph (1) shall remain available until expended,*
 16 *without further appropriation, for the acquisition of*
 17 *land and interests in land for the National Forest*
 18 *System.*

19 *(g) COSTS.—As a condition for the conveyance under*
 20 *this section, the Secretary shall require the Alliance to pay*
 21 *at closing any reasonable appraisal, survey, and closing*
 22 *costs.*

23 *(h) ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS.—The Secretary shall not*
 24 *be required to comply with National Environmental Policy*
 25 *Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) or any other applicable*

1 *environmental law in carrying out the conveyance under*
2 *this section.*

3 (i) *HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.—For purposes of the*
4 *conveyance under this section, the Secretary—*

5 (1) *shall meet disclosure requirements for haz-*
6 *ardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants under*
7 *section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental*
8 *Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980*
9 *(42 U.S.C. 9620(h)); and*

10 (2) *shall not otherwise be required to remediate*
11 *or abate those hazardous substances, pollutants, or*
12 *contaminants.*

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