

**Texas A&M Forest Service
Summary of Budget Recommendations - House**

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Method of Financing	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change (\$)	Biennial Change (%)
General Revenue Funds	\$31,362,113	\$224,136,190	\$192,774,077	614.7%
GR Dedicated Funds	\$127,949,117	\$126,817,658	(\$1,131,459)	(0.9%)
<i>Total GR-Related Funds</i>	<i>\$159,311,230</i>	<i>\$350,953,848</i>	<i>\$191,642,618</i>	<i>120.3%</i>
Federal Funds	\$8,664,250	\$9,979,174	\$1,314,924	15.2%
Other	\$1,011,702	\$957,736	(\$53,966)	(5.3%)
All Funds	\$168,987,182	\$361,890,758	\$192,903,576	114.2%

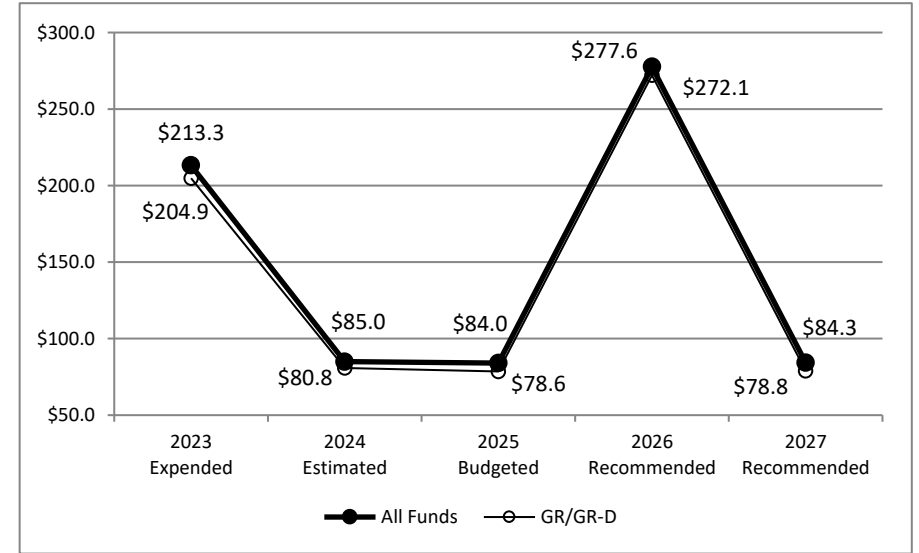
	FY 2025 Budgeted	FY 2027 Recommended	Biennial Change	Percent Change
FTEs	541.1	541.1	0.0	0.0%

Agency Budget and Policy Issues and/or Highlights

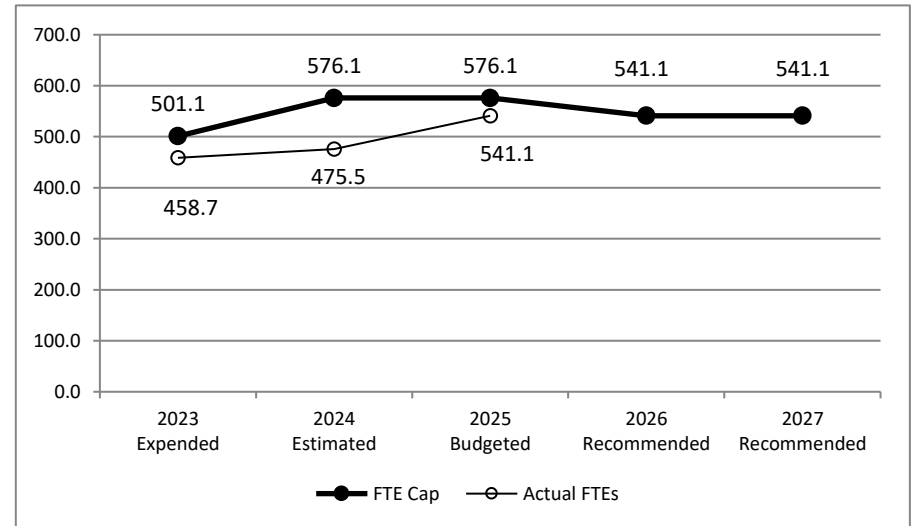
Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) provides wildfire prevention, detection, and suppression services and administers the statewide Texas Wildfire Protection Plan. TFS also assists during all-hazard emergencies such as flooding, ice storms, tornados, and hurricanes. TFS is involved in forestry leadership activities, such as providing technical assistance and information to Texas forest landowners and performing resource assessments for the timber industries, and conducts applied research on forest insects and diseases.

The bill pattern for this agency (2026-27 Recommended) represents an estimated 87.2% of the agency's estimated total available funds for the 2026-27 biennium.

Historical Funding Levels (Millions)



Historical Full-Time-Equivalent Employees (FTEs)



Texas A&M Forest Service
Summary of Funding Changes and Recommendations - House

Funding Changes and Recommendations for the 2026-27 Biennium compared to the 2024-25 Base Spending Level (in millions)		General Revenue	GR-Dedicated	Federal Funds	Other Funds	All Funds	Strategy in Appendix A
<i>SIGNIFICANT Funding Changes and Recommendations (each issue is explained in Section 3 and additional details are provided in Appendix A):</i>							
A)	Increase of \$21,573 in General Revenue for infrastructure support strategy due to updated infrastructure support formula.	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	C.1.2
B)	Increase of \$192,291,000 in General Revenue to cover the total amount of unfunded Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program grants.	\$192.3	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$192.3	B.1.2
<i>OTHER Funding Changes and Recommendations (these issues are not addressed in Section 3 but details are provided in Appendix A):</i>							
C)	Increase in funding to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.	\$0.5	\$1.2	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$1.7	A.1.1, A.1.2, A.1.3, B.1.1, C.1.1, C.1.3
D)	Reduction of \$1,000,000 in General Revenue due to one-time appropriations to support the Frelsburg Volunteer Fire Department in the 2024-25 biennium.	(\$1.0)	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	(\$1.0)	B.1.1
E)	Increase of \$1,000,000 in General Revenue to support the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department.	\$1.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$1.0	B.1.1
F)	Reduction of \$2,056,918 in GR-D Account 36 due to a one-time appropriation for vehicle purchases in the 2024-25 biennium.	\$0.0	(\$2.1)	\$0.0	\$0.0	(\$2.1)	B.1.1
G)	Reduction of \$251,350 in GR-D Account 5064 due to carryforward authority into the 2024-25 biennium from the 2022-23 biennium for supply chain delays.	\$0.0	(\$0.3)	\$0.0	\$0.0	(\$0.3)	B.1.2
H)	Increase of \$1,314,924 in available Federal Funds across strategies.	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$1.3	\$0.0	\$1.3	A.1.1, A.1.2, A.1.3, B.1.1, B.1.2, D.1.1
I)	Increase of \$9,131 in Appropriated Receipts and reduction of \$63,097 in License Plate Fund to align with agency projected revenue.	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	(\$0.1)	(\$0.1)	A.1.1, A.1.2, B.1.1
TOTAL SIGNIFICANT & OTHER Funding Changes and Recommendations (in millions)		\$192.8	(\$1.2)	\$1.3	(\$0.1)	\$192.8	As Listed
<i>SIGNIFICANT & OTHER Funding Increases</i>		\$193.8	\$1.2	\$1.3	\$0.0	\$196.3	As Listed
<i>SIGNIFICANT & OTHER Funding Decreases</i>		(\$1.0)	(\$2.4)	\$0.0	(\$0.1)	(\$3.5)	As Listed

NOTE: Totals may not sum due to rounding.

**Texas A&M Forest Service
Selected Fiscal and Policy Issues - House**

1. **Infrastructure Support.** Funding to Texas A&M System agencies for Infrastructure Support Inside Brazos County is calculated using the General Academic Institutions' Infrastructure Support formula rate. Texas A&M System agricultural agencies (including the Texas A&M Forest Service) also receive funding for Infrastructure Support Outside Brazos County as a sum-certain appropriation. Currently, the infrastructure support funds included in the recommendations for inside Brazos County are at the 2026-27 Texas A&M University rate multiplied by the agencies' fiscal 2023 predicted square footage.
2. **Supplemental Appropriations Bill Request.** The Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) reports that 2022, 2023, and 2024 have been active years for the agency to be called upon to respond to various all-hazard incidents (e.g., wildfires, floods, tornados, winter storms, and hurricanes). While final billing for emergency responses from the U.S. Forest Service and reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have not yet been received, TFS estimates \$100 million will be needed in a Supplemental Appropriations Bill to cover anticipated bills.

Aircraft resources for wildfire suppression in the state are currently obtained wholly through federal agency contracts. When wildfire activity levels are high across the United States, Texas must compete with other states for these federal resources. To address this, TFS has requested an exceptional item for the 2026-27 biennium totaling \$369.1 million and 90.0 FTEs for the purpose of purchasing aircraft and contracting additional aviation resources. Of this request, \$200.0 million would be associated with one-time costs to purchase aircraft and the remaining \$169.1 million would be used to contract aircraft and support operations. **This request is not included in recommendations for the 2026-27 biennium.**

3. **Grant Programs for Local Fire Departments.** The Seventy-seventh Legislature, 2001, established the Rural Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) Assistance Program to provide grants for fire trucks, protective gear, equipment, and training for eligible VFDs. This program is funded through a special assessment on the insurance industry. The Eighty-eighth Legislature, 2023, appropriated \$45.3 million for the Rural VFD Assistance Program in the 2024-25 General Appropriations Act (GAA), as well as an additional \$10.0 million in supplemental appropriations through Senate Bill 30 as part of the Keeping Texas Prepared (KTP) program.

The Eightieth Legislature, 2007, enacted Senate Bill 11 to establish the framework for mutual aid response in Texas. Working with the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Texas Fire Chiefs Association, the Texas A&M Forest Service developed the Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System (TIFMAS) to provide grants, training and qualifications, and mobilization systems to make statewide use of local resources. The Eighty-eighth Legislature, 2023, appropriated \$2.0 million for TIFMAS grants in the 2024-25 GAA, as well as an additional \$3.0 million in supplemental appropriations through Senate Bill 30 as part of KTP.

The table below reflects the biennial appropriations for TIFMAS grants and the Rural VFD Assistance Program, as stated in the informational riders in the agency's bill pattern. For the 2024-25 biennium, the total amounts include supplemental appropriations from Senate Bill 30.

Biennial Appropriations for Rural VFD Assistance Program and TIFMAS

Fiscal Years	VFD Assistance Program	TIFMAS Grants
2016-17	\$60.0 million	\$2.0 million
2018-19	\$46.1 million	\$2.0 million
2020-21	\$46.1 million	\$2.0 million
2022-23	\$45.7 million	\$2.0 million
2024-25	\$55.3 million*	\$5.0 million*
Note: *Amounts include supplemental appropriations from Senate Bill 30, Section 4.28.		

Unfunded VFD grants total \$192.3 million as of November 2024, which are broken out in the table below. **Recommendations for the 2026-27 biennium include a one-time appropriation of \$192.3 million in General Revenue to fund the backlog of VFD grant requests.**

Rural VFD Assistance Program Unfunded Requests
(As of November 2024)

Grant Category	Number of Requests	Value of Requests
Trucks	596	\$146.7 million
Fire/Rescue	812	\$19.0 million
Personal Protective Equipment	544	\$13.6 million
Slip-on Units	330	\$9.9 million
Training Aids	311	\$3.1 million
TOTAL	2,593	\$192.3 million

For the 2026-27 biennium, TFS is requesting an exceptional item request of \$44.0 million in increased funding for VFD grants from GR-D Account 5064. Funding this exceptional item request would require modifying Insurance Code, Chapter 2007, as the statutory limit of \$30.0 million per year would be exceeded. **This exceptional item request is not included in recommendations for the 2026-27 biennium.**

4. **Keeping Texas Prepared.** The Eighty-eighth Legislature, 2023, appropriated \$96.7 million in All Funds and 174.8 FTEs to the Texas A&M Forest Service, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, Texas Division of Emergency Management, and Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service through Senate Bill 30 for several initiatives under the Keeping Texas Prepared (KTP) program. This resulted from the System’s joint request for funding to support mostly existing programs at agencies responsible for emergency response. The agencies were funded and provided FTEs at 75.0 percent of their original exceptional item request and received unexpended balance authority through fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Funding for KTP was included in the agencies' 2026-27 GR/GR-D Limits.

For the 2026-27 biennium, the five emergency response agencies are requesting exceptional items to expand Keeping Texas Prepared initiatives totaling \$78.9 million and 203.0 FTEs. TFS has requested \$30.0 million and 40.0 FTEs to add 40 fire and emergency response positions, increase salaries to improve recruitment and retention efforts, address increased costs for vehicle and heavy equipment replacements, and address increased operating costs. **This request is not included in recommendations for the 2026-2027 biennium.**

**Texas A&M Forest Service
Rider Highlights - House**

Modification of Existing Riders

2. **Overtime Payments, Contingency.** Recommendations make conforming changes by updating fiscal years.
4. **Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System (TIFMAS) Grants.** Recommendations modify amounts listed to reflect the 2026-27 base funding for TIFMAS Grants from the General Revenue-Dedicated Texas Department of Insurance Operating Fund Account No. 036 and ensure statutory citations are consistent.
5. **Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program (Wildfire Protection Plan).** Recommendations provide \$192.3 million in General Revenue in fiscal year 2026 for unfunded requests for the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program and grants unexpended balance authority within the biennium. Recommendations also make conforming changes by updating appropriation amounts and fiscal years.
6. **Carryforward Authority for Supply Chain Delays.** Recommendations allow TFS to carry forward funds obligated for grants to fire departments for the purchase of vehicles and equipment for an extra fiscal year to mitigate the effects of supply chain delays between the 2022-23 and 2024-25 biennia.

New Riders

8. **Columbus Volunteer Fire Department.** Recommendations provide \$1.0 million in General Revenue in fiscal year 2026 to support the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department.

Deleted Riders

4. **Texas Wildfire Protection Plan.** Rider is outdated and no longer necessary. Funding for the Texas Wildfire Protection Plan (TWPP) was split into separate strategies in the 2016-2017 biennium, and the strategies were renamed in the agency's 2026-27 budget structure to replace references to TWPP with Keeping Texas Prepared.
10. **Frelsburg Volunteer Fire Department.** Rider is no longer required, as it was associated with one-time funding.

**Texas A&M Forest Service
Items Not Included in Recommendations - House**

	2026-27 Biennial Total			Information Technology Involved?	Contracting Involved?	Estimated Continued Cost 2028-29
	GR & GR-D	All Funds	FTEs			

Agency Rider Requests Not Included

A)	TFS requested to delete Rider 7, Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program (Wildfire Protection Plan), as the use of the GR-D Account 5064 is defined in statute and the amounts presented in the rider can be found under the Method of Finance.					
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Agency Exceptional Items Not Included (in agency priority order)

1)	Keeping Texas Prepared: State Firefighting Capacity. Funding would allow the agency to add 40 fire/emergency response positions; increase salaries to improve recruitment and retention efforts; address increased costs for vehicle and heavy equipment replacements; and address increased operating costs.	\$29,950,000	\$29,950,000	40.0	No	Yes	\$29,950,000
2)	VFD Grants. Funding would be used to meet the annual level of grant requests from the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program.	\$44,000,000	\$44,000,000	0.0	No	No	\$44,000,000
3)	Wildfire Suppression Aircraft. Funding would allow the agency to purchase aircraft and contract additional aviation resources annually to meet state needs.	\$369,100,000	\$369,100,000	90.0	No	Yes	\$169,100,000

TOTAL Items Not Included in Recommendations	\$443,050,000	\$443,050,000	130.0			\$243,050,000
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**Texas A&M Forest Service
Appendices - House**

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* Appendix is not included - no significant information to report

**Texas A&M Forest Service
Funding Changes and Recommendations by Strategy - House -- ALL FUNDS**

Strategy/Goal	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change	% Change	Comments
FORESTRY LEADERSHIP A.1.1	\$15,476,706	\$16,392,352	\$915,646	5.9%	Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$553,548 increase in Federal Funds for forest inventory and analysis and forest stewardship; • \$9,131 increase in Appropriated Receipts for Timber Management Program; • \$280,221 increase in General Revenue to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations; and • \$72,746 increase in General Revenue due to a reallocation between strategies to meet operational needs.
FOREST / TREE RESOURCES ENHANCEMENT A.1.2	\$4,760,066	\$5,136,970	\$376,904	7.9%	Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$339,939 increase in Federal Funds for urban forestry; • \$20,630 reduction in urban forestry license plate funds; • \$56,323 increase in General Revenue to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations; and • \$1,272 increase in General Revenue due to a reallocation between strategies to meet operational needs.
FOREST INSECTS AND DISEASES A.1.3	\$2,198,075	\$2,165,188	(\$32,887)	(1.5%)	Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$76,336 reduction in Federal Funds for forest health; • \$37,654 increase in General Revenue to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations; and • \$5,795 increase in General Revenue due to a reallocation between strategies to meet operational needs.
Total, Goal A, DEVELOP FOREST RESOURCES	\$22,434,847	\$23,694,510	\$1,259,663	5.6%	

**Texas A&M Forest Service
Funding Changes and Recommendations by Strategy - House -- ALL FUNDS**

Strategy/Goal	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change	% Change	Comments
KTP - TFS OPERATIONS B.1.1	\$80,179,715	\$79,747,498	(\$432,217)	(0.5%)	Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$110,176 increase in Federal Funds for state fire assistance and cross-boundary hazard mitigation; • \$42,467 reduction in Smokey Bear license plate funds; • \$1,000,000 reduction in General Revenue funds for the one-time appropriation to support the Frelsburg Volunteer Fire Department; • \$1,000,000 increase in General Revenue funds to support the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department; • \$2,056,918 reduction in GR-D Account 36 due to one-time appropriation for motor vehicle purchases; • \$65,182 increase in General Revenue, \$833,568 increase in GR-D Account 36, \$225,427 increase in GR-D Account 5064, \$900 increase in GR-D Account 5066 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations; and • \$455,475 increase in General Revenue, \$15,906 reduction in GR-D Account 36, \$10,786 reduction in GR-D Account 5064, and \$3,132 increase in GR-D Account 5066 due to a reallocation between strategies to meet operational needs.
KTP - VFD GRANTS B.1.2	\$49,472,477	\$241,726,262	\$192,253,785	388.6%	Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$192,291,000 increase in General Revenue to cover the total amount of unfunded Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program grants; • \$217,267 increase in Federal Funds for state fire assistance; • \$251,350 reduction in GR-D Account 5064 due to carryforward authority for supply chain delays; and • \$3,132 reduction in GR-D Account 5066 due to a reallocation between strategies to meet operational needs.
KTP - TIFMAS GRANTS B.1.3	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$0	0.0%	
WILDFIRE EMERGENCY FUNDS B.1.4	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%	
Total, Goal B, KEEPING TEXAS PREPARED	\$134,652,192	\$326,473,760	\$191,821,568	142.5%	

**Texas A&M Forest Service
Funding Changes and Recommendations by Strategy - House -- ALL FUNDS**

Strategy/Goal	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change	% Change	Comments
INDIRECT ADMINISTRATION C.1.1	\$5,727,187	\$5,865,252	\$138,065	2.4%	Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$15,247 increase in General Revenue, \$92,572 increase in GR-D Account 36, and \$20,990 increase in GR-D Account 5064 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations; and • \$184,057 reduction in General Revenue, \$182,527 increase in GR-D Account 36, and \$10,786 increase in GR-D Account 5064 due to a reallocation between strategies to meet operational needs.
INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT IN BRAZOS CO C.1.2	\$802,778	\$308,328	(\$494,450)	(61.6%)	Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$21,573 increase in General Revenue due to the updated infrastructure support formula; and • \$351,853 reduction in General Revenue and \$164,170 reduction in GR-D Account 36 due to a reallocation between strategies to meet operational needs.
INFRASTRUCT SUPP OUTSIDE BRAZOS CO C.1.3	\$2,158,666	\$2,167,066	\$8,400	0.4%	Recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6,877 increase in General Revenue and \$3,352 increase in GR-D Account 36 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations; and • \$622 increase in General Revenue and \$2,451 reduction in GR-D Account 36 due to a reallocation between strategies to meet operational needs.
Total, Goal C, INDIRECT ADMINISTRATION	\$8,688,631	\$8,340,646	(\$347,985)	(4.0%)	
STAFF GROUP INSURANCE D.1.1	\$3,211,512	\$3,381,842	\$170,330	5.3%	Recommendations include an increase in Federal Funds for forest inventory and analysis, urban forestry, and forest stewardship.
Total, Goal D, STAFF BENEFITS	\$3,211,512	\$3,381,842	\$170,330	5.3%	
Grand Total, All Strategies	\$168,987,182	\$361,890,758	\$192,903,576	114.2%	

**Texas A&M Forest Service
FTE Highlights - House**

Full-Time-Equivalent Positions	Expended 2023	Estimated 2024	Budgeted 2025	Recommended 2026	Recommended 2027
Cap	501.1	576.1	576.1	541.1	541.1
Actual/Budgeted	458.7	475.5	541.1	NA	NA

Notes:

a) Actual FTEs for FY 2024 reflect the amount reported by the State Auditor's Office.