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FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE STATE BUDGET ADVANCES IN THE HOUSE

House Appropriations committee approves HB1, highlights paying down debt, investing in education; HB2 holds construction funding under-budget

BATON ROUGE, LA – The overall Louisiana state budget for the year starting July 1, 2026 passed its first step in the process today as the House Appropriations committee approved a \$47 billion budget headed to the full House for a vote later this week. Authored by **Appropriations Chair Rep. Jack McFarland**, (R)-Jonesboro, HB1 emphasizes fiscal responsibility by prioritizing paying down debt, providing more support to Louisiana students, and attracting new industries that will change the face of Louisiana’s economy – all without raising taxes.

“We are strategically investing in education, workforce and training so we stay on track to create new high-demand, high-paying jobs, while we prepare our workforce to fill those jobs right here at home,” said **Appropriations Chairman McFarland**. “From the energy sector to new technology, we are breaking barriers so families will continue to want to call Louisiana home for generations to come.”

“We know that our future rests on how much we invest in our students across every classroom, from pre-K to community colleges and universities,” said **House Speaker Phillip DeVillier**. “With this budget, we are sending a clear signal across the nation that Louisiana is here to lead when it comes to welcoming industries that will propel this country forward over the next decade and beyond.”

Key investments in next year’s budget plan include:

- \$420 million in funding for early childhood education
- Fully funding the K-12 education funding formula (MFP)
- For the first time since 2009, increases per-pupil funding for school districts’ operational needs (up from \$100 to \$147 per student) for expenses including fuel, insurance, utilities and retirement costs. (Provided in addition to the state’s MFP per-student educational funding)
- \$87 million for the LA GATOR scholarship program, offering families education savings accounts

- \$47 million in funding to Louisiana Economic Development (LED) for new projects, and programs attracting private industry investment
- \$50 million to replenish a fund to face future emergencies such as hurricanes
- \$144 million surplus payment to LASERS to pay down state retirement debt

The House Ways and Means committee today also approved the Capital Outlay bill (HB2) for the coming year, reflecting funding for the state’s construction budget. Both bills build on the fiscally responsible foundation of tax reforms passed in the first two years of this 2024-2028 legislature’s term.

Furthering the goals of fiscal stewardship and accountability:

- Total construction projects funded in House Bill 2 remain within the state’s bonding capacity for new lines of credit, and *under* the number of surplus dollars available for projects.
- In addition, the state would now “bundle” funding for various sets of building projects so that capital for *under-budget* projects can flow to projects that need it, and *over-budget* projects will now have the ability to timely use those dollars.

“This statewide construction budget advanced today stays under the maximum available funding level by several million dollars,” said **Ways and Means Chairman Rep. Tony Bacala**, (R)-Prairieville. “Continuing our commitment to remain prudent and accountable to the taxpayers, we balanced efficient use of funds by redirecting funds away from projects that were dormant for years to projects that are urgently needed and ready to break ground.”

The full House will take up HB1 and HB2, along with other funding bills, on Thursday, April 16th, continuing the regular budget process during this 2026 Regular Legislative Session that ends June 1st.

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