



State of Mississippi

TATE REEVES
Governor

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

CHRIS WELLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 12, 2026

Mr. Lee Frederick
Mississippi Department of Transportation
401 North West Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
lfrederick@mdot.ms.gov

Dear Mr. Frederick:

Re: Mississippi Department of Transportation
City of Gulfport
Gulfport Interconnector Roadway
Harrison County
COE No. SAM20230089
WQC No. WQC2024006

Pursuant to Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U. S. C. 1251, 1341), the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) issues this Certification, after public notice and opportunity for public hearing, to the Mississippi Department of Transportation, an applicant for a Federal License or permit to conduct the following activity:

Mississippi Department of Transportation, Gulfport Interconnector Roadway: Project to conduct regulated activities in jurisdictional wetlands for the construction of an approximately 3.0-mile transportation corridor oriented in a north-south alignment along the western portion of the I-10 and U.S. Highway 49 interchange. The infrastructure improvement project includes approximately 1.7 miles of 2-lane expansion/upgrades, approximately 1.3 miles of new 4-lane alignment, and the construction of an approximately 47-acre detention pond construction along the southeastern portion of the project site. Approximately 6.07 acres of emergent wetlands and 92.22 acres of mixed wet pine/bottomland hardwood wetlands will be impacted by the activities. A total of approximately 98.29 acres of wetlands will be impacted by the planned project over the course of the proposed project. The applicant will purchase available compensatory mitigation credits from an

OFFICE OF POLLUTION CONTROL
POST OFFICE BOX 2261 • JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39225-2261 • TEL: (601) 961-5171 • FAX: (601) 354-6612 •
www.mdeq.ms.gov

Facebook: @mdeq.ms • Twitter: @MDEQ • Instagram:
@MDEQ AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

approved mitigation bank within the Turkey Creek watershed for the proposed impacts [SAM-2024-00078-CSP; WQC2024013].

MDEQ certifies that the above-described activity will be in compliance with the applicable provisions of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act and Section 49-17-29 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, if the applicant complies with the following conditions:

1. All fill material and excavation areas shall have side slopes of 3:1 (horizontal: vertical) or flatter and shall be immediately seeded, stabilized and maintained. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
2. Appropriate best management practices (BMPs) shall be properly installed and maintained to prevent the movement of sediment off-site and into adjacent drainage areas. Special care shall be taken prior to and during construction to prevent the movement of sediment into adjacent avoided wetland areas. In the event of any BMP failure, corrective actions shall be taken immediately. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
3. Coverage under a Large Stormwater Construction General NPDES Permit shall be obtained prior to the start of construction activities. No construction activities shall begin until such approvals are obtained. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
4. To ensure hydrologic connectivity between onsite and adjacent offsite wetlands, the permittee shall install culvert crossings along the non-elevated portions of the roadway at intervals, sizes, and invert elevations consistent with pre-project hydrologic conditions. Final design plans demonstrating hydrologic connectivity shall be submitted prior to construction. Culverts shall be maintained in functional condition for the duration of the project. (Statement E) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.3.4.A(6))
5. The post-construction stormwater management plan submitted by Neel-Shaffer on March 16, 2026, shall be implemented concurrently with project construction and maintained as proposed. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R.1.3.4.A(9))
6. Sixty (60) days prior to construction, the permittee shall submit final design plans for the wet detention basin to MDEQ for review and approval. The submittal must demonstrate that the basin is designed to meet applicable water quality treatment requirements for pollutants of concern based on expected hydraulic loading. Construction shall not commence until written approval is issued by MDEQ. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R.1.3.4.A(9))

7. The permittee shall first obtain all available compensatory mitigation credits from approved mitigation banks or in-lieu fee programs located within the Turkey Creek watershed. Only after all such credits have been exhausted may the permittee utilize Corps-approved mitigation banks outside the Turkey Creek basin. (Statement E) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R 1.3.4 A(2))
8. Mitigation for the impacts to 6.07 acres of emergent wetlands and 92.22 acres of mixed pine/bottomland hardwood wetlands shall be provided by the purchase of mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank. The number of credits must be in accordance with banking prospectus and be based upon that required for impacting 6.07 acres of emergent wetlands and 92.22 acres of mixed pine/bottomland hardwood wetlands. Written verification of credit purchase must be provided to MDEQ prior to the commencement of any work in the wetland areas. (Statement E) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R 1.3.4 A(2))
9. Turbidity outside the limits of a 750-foot mixing zone shall not exceed the ambient turbidity by more than 50 Nephelometric Turbidity Units. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R.2.2.A.(3))
10. No sewage, oil, refuse, or other pollutants shall be discharged into the watercourse. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 2.2.A.(3))

As part of the Scope of Review for Application Decisions, 11 Mississippi Administrative Code Part 6, Rule 1.3.4(B), the above conditions are necessary for MDEQ to ensure that appropriate measures will be taken to eliminate unreasonable degradation and irreparable harm to waters of the State, such that the activity will not meet the criteria for denial:

- (A) The proposed activity permanently alters the aquatic ecosystem such that water quality criteria are violated and/or it no longer supports its existing or classified uses. An example is the channelization of streams.
- (B) There is a feasible alternative to the activity which reduces adverse consequences on water quality and classified or existing uses of waters of the State.
- (C) The proposed activity adversely impacts waters containing State or federally recognized threatened or endangered species.
- (D) The proposed activity adversely impacts a special or unique aquatic habitat, such as National or State Wild and Scenic Rivers and/or State Outstanding Resource Waters.
- (E) The proposed activity in conjunction with other activities may result in adverse cumulative impacts.

- (F) Nonpoint source/storm water management practices necessary to protect water quality have not been proposed.
- (G) Denial of wastewater permits and/or approvals by the State with regard to the proposed activities.
- (H) The proposed activity results in significant environmental impacts which may adversely impact water quality.

MDEQ also certifies that there are no limitations under Section 302 nor standards under Sections 306 and 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act which are applicable to the applicant's above-described activity.

This certification is valid for the project as proposed. Any deviations without proper modifications and/or approvals may result in a violation of the 401 Water Quality Certification. If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Barefoot.

Sincerely,



Becky Simonson
Chief, Environmental Permits Division

cc: Jared Everitt, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
Jamie Becker, Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
Willa Brantley, Department of Marine Resources
Paul Necaise, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mayor Hugh Keating, City of Gulfport
Walt Dinkelacker, Headwaters, Inc.
Damon Torricelli, Neel-Shaffer

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY