

DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY

FY 2026 BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

MAY 21, 2025





**Delta Regional Authority
2026 Congressional Budget Justification**

LETTER FROM THE FEDERAL CO-CHAIRMAN

May 21, 2025

On behalf of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), I respectfully submit this letter as formal justification for the agency's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget.

Congress established the DRA in 2000 as a bipartisan mechanism for joint federal-state collaboration to promote economic development across the lower Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt. The Economic Development Reauthorization Act (EDRA) of 2024, enacted as part of the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-272, Division B, Title II) and signed into law on January 4, 2025, formally reauthorized the Authority through FY 2029.

The DRA serves 255 counties and parishes in eight states—Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee—by investing in transportation and basic public infrastructure, workforce training, and small business development.

By statute, DRA is responsible for creating a regional plan with public input that is approved by our board of governors. Consistent with DRA's Regional Development Plan IV, DRA's FY 2024 investments included more than \$57 million in critical public infrastructure, which leveraged \$163 million in public and private investment to support more than 4,100 jobs created or retained, more than 1,900 individuals trained in workforce development programming, and more than 116,000 families positively impacted through access to improved basic public infrastructure. DRA also invested over \$10 million in workforce development training and over \$2 million in strategic planning funds to encourage economic growth and opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Corey Wiggins".

Dr. Corey Wiggins
Federal Co-Chair



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ABOUT THE DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY

The DRA was established in 2000 as a formal framework for joint federal-state collaboration to promote and encourage the economic development of the lower Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions. DRA invests in projects supporting transportation infrastructure, basic public infrastructure, workforce training, and business development. DRA works to create jobs, build communities, and improve the lives of those who reside in the region. DRA's region encompasses 255 counties and parishes in parts of Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.

State Members: Board of Governors

Governor Kay Ivey, State of Alabama
Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, State of Arkansas
Governor JB Pritzker, State of Illinois
Governor Andy Beshear, Commonwealth of Kentucky (States' Co-Chair)
Governor Jeff Landry, State of Louisiana
Governor Tate Reeves, State of Mississippi
Governor Mike Kehoe, State of Missouri
Governor Bill Lee, State of Tennessee



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Introduction

The President's FY2026 Budget proposes the elimination of several agencies, including the Delta Regional Authority. DRA would use \$4 million in unobligated balances to conduct an orderly closeout of the agency in 2026, including legal fees, asset disposal, record-keeping requirements, employee severance packages for departing staff, and other shutdown expenses. The Budget also requests the permanent cancellation of \$25 million in unobligated balances and \$23 million in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) emergency balances.

The below Budget table presents a summary of the FY2026 shut down budget expenditures from federal unobligated balances:

FY 2026 Budget Shut Down Summary

Category	Budget Expenditure
Salaries, Benefits and Severance	\$3,000,000
Travel and Vehicle Cost	\$10,000
Office Leases, Utilities and Telephone	\$70,000
Office Equipment, Supplies, Printing and Postage	\$12,000
Professional and Contractual Services	\$908,000
Total	\$4,000,000

The administrative funds necessary to shut down in FY 2026 are presented below, to include:

Salaries, Benefits and Severance

Cost associated with payroll and benefits for two federal appointed positions and 25 non-federal positions. DRA would reduce staff levels throughout the fiscal year and work to provide incentive pay for non-federal employees throughout the shutdown process and severance pay for non-federal employees upon exit.

Travel and Vehicle Cost

Cost associated with the one DRA vehicle, maintained by the federal co-chairman for official business purposes and cost associated with mileage and/or fuel, rental vehicles, hotels, airfare, meals and incidentals, taxis, parking fees, etc., consisting primarily of potential trips to the Mississippi or D.C. office for asset disposal, record keeping, or other task associated with shutting down operations.

Office Leases, Utilities and Telephone

Cost associated with long-term leases for the regional headquarters in Clarksdale, Mississippi, and the federal office in Washington, D.C., and for internet, business phones, basic utilities, and related items.



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Office Equipment, Supplies, Printing and Postage

Cost associated for computers, printers, external monitors, accessories, stationery, writing utensils, binders, folders, and related items.

Professional Services/Contractual

Cost associated with specialists that provide unique services unavailable to be provided by DRA staff.

APPROPRIATIONS LANGUAGE

The 2026 President's Budget includes the appropriations language listed below.

Delta Regional Authority

Of the unobligated balances from prior year appropriations available under this heading, \$48,000,000 is hereby permanently cancelled, which shall include \$23,000,000 in unobligated balances from amounts made available under this heading in division J of Public Law 117-58: Provided, That any remaining unobligated balances from amounts previously made available under this heading shall be available only for expenses necessary to carry out the closure of the Delta Regional Authority.

Note.--This account is operating under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A of Public Law 119-4).