



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Foreign Purchase of Farmland Study Committee Releases Final Report**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Pursuant to House Bill 280 of the Mississippi Legislature’s 2023 Regular Session, the Study Committee on Foreign Purchase of Farmland in Mississippi has released its report containing the committee’s findings and recommendations. The Mississippi Legislature has been provided the report as a resource to use as legislation is being crafted for the upcoming 2024 legislative session.

The report contains the official findings of the Foreign Purchase of Farmland Study Committee including USDA foreign ownership of land data, a comprehensive list of public comments and testimony submitted to the committee, current Mississippi laws and regulations as set by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Mississippi Public Service Commission related to foreign ownership of water rights and energy facilities.

The following are highlights from the December 2021 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency “Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land” report. In 2021, 757,816 agricultural acres were held by foreign interests in Mississippi. This is an increase from 600,456 acres in 2011. Nationally, as of December 2021, 40,031,308 acres of all private agricultural land in the U.S. had foreign ownership. This was an increase of 2.4 million acres from Dec. 31, 2020, and an increase of 14.3 million acres since 2011.

The Study Committee issued the following observations and recommendations as part of its final report:

- It is clear that current Mississippi law restricts foreign ownership of land by “nonresident aliens” except for the purpose of industrial development. However, the law lacks a clear, workable enforcement mechanism.
- Continued unrestricted foreign ownership of Mississippi’s agricultural land and water rights especially by foreign adversaries as defined in 15 CFR 7.4 presents a serious concern to Mississippi and to national security, including food security.
- The Legislature should act to address these concerns. At a bare minimum, the Legislature should pass an enforcement mechanism with any appropriate reporting requirements and legal enforcement procedures, along with any exemptions as may be necessary or appropriate tailored

to Mississippi needs and based on the experiences of other States. In order to accomplish this, the Study Committee highly recommends that the Legislature review and receive guidance from legal experts within the National Agricultural Law Center.

“As chairman of the Mississippi Study Committee on Foreign Purchase of Farmland, I want to personally thank and commend each of the members of this Study Committee for their diligent and meaningful work represented in today’s final report to the Legislature. I am deeply concerned by the dramatic increase in foreign ownership of Mississippi’s most valuable asset, our farmland. I believe most Mississippians share this concern, and I encourage the Mississippi Legislature to utilize the information contained in the Study Committee’s report as the basis from which to act during the 2024 Regular Legislative Session,” said Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson.

Visit [www.mdac.ms.gov/msaglandreport](http://www.mdac.ms.gov/msaglandreport) to view the full report containing the official findings of the Study Committee. Visit [www.mdac.ms.gov/farmland](http://www.mdac.ms.gov/farmland) for more information about the Study Committee including full Study Committee meeting recordings.

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**Photo Attached.**



**The Study Committee on Foreign Purchase of Farmland in Mississippi held four formal meetings at the State Capitol. Vice Chairman Bill Pigott and Committee Chairman Andy Gipson pictured.**