



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

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Ag Commissioner Takes Executive Action; Issues Order Reaffirming Merit-Based Principles and Prohibiting Discriminatory DEI Practices

JACKSON, Miss. – Today, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson took executive action to issue an agencywide Commissioner’s Order Reaffirming Merit-Based Principles and Prohibiting Discriminatory DEI Practices. The Commissioner’s Order was issued in support of President Donald J. Trump’s recent federal prohibition of discriminatory DEI programs. DEI is an abbreviation for the “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” programs mandated since January 20, 2021, that were illegally based on discrimination and/or preferences for a person’s race, color, sex, ethnicity or national origin.

The Commissioner’s Order issued today reaffirms the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce’s (MDAC’s) commitment to merit-based principles as the official policy of the agency, and the Order also prohibits discriminatory DEI practices with respect to any taxpayer dollars that flow through MDAC. The Commissioner’s Order prohibits DEI programs to the extent any contractors, subcontractors, grants, employees or agents may receive funds from MDAC. To carry out this directive, the Commissioner’s Order requires each MDAC Director to review all contracts, subcontracts and programs to make sure DEI is not and will not be supported through any use of funds or programs administered by MDAC.

“Here at the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, we are proud to embrace a merit-based approach, rewarding individual initiative, skills, good performance and hard work, without regard to any person’s race, color or other DEI factors. We will not tolerate discrimination of any kind, including DEI discrimination,” said Commissioner Gipson.

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/ending-radical-and-wasteful-government-dei-programs-and-preferencing/>. According to the President’s Executive Order, the previous administration forced DEI discrimination programs “into virtually all aspects of the Federal Government.”

Commissioner Gipson elaborated, “Prior to last Monday’s Executive Order, DEI had become so entrenched within the federal government that taxpayers have no idea how far DEI may have infiltrated federal and state contractors, subcontractors and federal and other state agency partners. My Order today

will proactively require at the State level a full sixty-day review of all relevant contracts and programs to determine whether any federally mandated DEI principles may have crept into the contracting process within the State of Mississippi, at least insofar as our agency is concerned. As we work toward building a truly colorblind society, Mississippians expect and deserve action on this important issue. Along with President Trump, I am committed to ending DEI discrimination wherever we may find it.”

Visit <https://agnet.mdac.ms.gov/agManage/uploads/1915.pdf> to view the Commissioner’s Order Reaffirming Merit-Based Principles and Prohibiting Discriminatory DEI Practices.

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Photo Attached.



Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson signs Commissioner’s Order Reaffirming Merit-Based Principles and Prohibiting Discriminatory DEI Practices in support of President Donald J. Trump’s recent prohibition of DEI programs at the federal level.