



April 22, 2019

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### This Week at the Statehouse

#### Last Week at the Statehouse

Last week *Ernest Frederick "Fritz" Hollings* (January 1, 1922 - April 6, 2019) who served as a United States Senator from South Carolina from 1966 to 2005 was mourned by South Carolinians. Sen. Hollings, a conservative Democrat, was also the Governor of South Carolina and the 77th Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina. He laid in state in the SC Statehouse Lobby on Tuesday, April 16th.

**The SC House of Representatives was on furlough the week of April 15th. The SC Senate went into session on Wednesday of last week, concentrating on the Budget.**

#### Legislative Update - Week 15

##### Issue: Disaster Aid

The budget was adopted by the Senate last week and it included \$25 million for farmers affected by Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael this year. An amendment proposed by Senators Sabb and Scott was adopted that will allow cotton gins in tier 4 counties to seek out aid up to \$50,000 for losses associated with the hurricanes. The budget will go to conference committee next where the House and Senate will negotiate the differences in the budget. Farm Aid was not originally part of the House budget so it is important to

communicate with your House members the importance of adopting the Senate version of the budget as it relates to farm aid.

*(S-A) 20. Disaster Fund - SCFB recommends the establishment of a fund by the SC General Assembly, to be administered by the SCDA that could assist SC farmers when they are severely damaged by regional natural disasters (drought, flood, hurricane, etc.).*

#### **Issue: Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress Rate Increase Case**

Duke Energy has requested a rate increase within the Piedmont and Pee Dee service areas. Duke proposed about a 12% increase for residential rates and tripled the basic facility charge from \$8 to \$28 a month. GR staff worked with ratepayers to voice concerns about how this would negatively impact agriculture during public hearings hosted by the PSC at the beginning of the month. There has been active dialogue between Duke Energy and SCFB as to what a fairer rate increase would look like which provides Duke the rate increase they say they need while not unduly burdening agricultural electricity users. The PSC will be making their decision as to the outcome of the rate case in the beginning of May.

*(S-GP) 1. Utilities - We support prudent decisions that have the least negative impact on utility rates, the state's economic stability and our citizens' quality of life.*

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## **Congressional Report**

### **National News**

Congress was not in Session last week so we have nothing to report.