



March 6, 2020

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This Week at the Statehouse

Legislative Update - Week 8

After 8 weeks, the Senate finished debating [S. 419 - the SC Career Opportunity and Access for All Act](#) (the education reform bill) - and gave the bill third reading on Thursday. This legislation will next go to the House for its consideration.

The House will take up the budget next week. Of note are the following items:

- SC Department of Agriculture:
 - \$1.1 million for hemp programming
 - \$630,000 for hemp testing lab equipment
- Creation of the Natural Disaster Resiliency Reserve Fund that includes financial assistance for verifiable losses of agricultural commodities due to a natural disaster. This will be funded in part from the \$25 million allocated to SC Dept. of Agriculture last year for Farm Aid Relief for a total allocation of \$50 million.

[H. 5306 - Agricultural Property Protection:](#) The week the House Agriculture Committee took up a piece of legislation that addresses SCFB priority issue of protection from urban sprawl. As SC continues to grow, more and more people are moving into rural areas. As people move closer to farms, required environmental setbacks limits how a farmer can use his land, which does not seem fair when the farm was there first. H. 5306 would eliminate the setback from a residence newly built on an adjoining property of an established farm that is currently subject to setbacks. All other required setbacks still apply. This would give the farmer back 600 feet of his land to use as he sees fit. The House

Agriculture committee voted unanimously to support H. 5306. Please contact the following members to thank them for their support:

[Hiott, David R., *Chairman*](#)

[Moss, V. Stephen "Steve", *1st V.C.*](#)

[Hixon, William M. "Bill", *2nd V.C.*](#)

[Kirby, Roger K., *Secy.*](#)

[Atkinson, Lucas](#)

[Bailey, William H.](#)

[Bryant, Bruce M.](#)

[Burns, James Mikell "Mike"](#)

[Chumley, William M. "Bill"](#)

[Forrest, Cally R. "Cal"](#)

[Haddon, Patrick B.](#)

[Henderson-Myers, Rosalyn D.](#)

[Ligon, Thomas R. "Randy"](#)

[Magnuson, Josiah](#)

[Martin, Richard "Rick"](#)

[Pendarvis, Marvin R.](#)

[Rivers, Michael F., Sr.](#)

[Williams, Robert Q.](#)

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Congressional Report

National News

President Ott and the National Legislative Committee were in Washington DC last week visiting with each of our Congressional Delegation. Topics covered included farm labor issues, trade and the future regulation of hemp.

Our Congressional members heard about the need to provide for a consistent, affordable year round guest labor program, how current trade tariffs continue to hurt farmers in South Carolina and the need for a clear and reasonable regulatory process for hemp production.