



South Carolina State Legislative Weekly Update - March 12, 2021

The General Assembly returned to the Capitol this week for their ninth week of the legislative session to continue their work for the state.

Purple Paint as Alternative Trespassing Notice

[House Bill 3291](#) that *allows for a different method of posting notices of trespassing involving clearly visible purple-painted boundaries* passed favorably out of full House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. The bill now heads to House floor consideration.



Governor's Emergency Orders

The House passed and sent to the Senate [H. 3443](#), a bill to establish more General Assembly Oversight of Gubernatorial Emergency Orders. In its amended version, after 30 days of an order's date, the General Assembly could meet at the call of the House Speaker and Senate President. An issued order could be terminated, or consented to, via a concurrent resolution. An order could also be altered or amended via a Joint Resolution at this called meeting. The Governor could not re-issue emergency orders that have been so addressed by the General Assembly.

Left Lane Drivers

The House amended, approved and sent the Senate [H. 3011](#). The bill would provide that on any controlled access roadway having two or more lanes allowing movement in the same direction, a driver may not continue to operate a motor vehicle in the furthestmost left-hand lane if the driver knows or reasonably should know that he is being overtaken in that lane from the rear by a motor vehicle traveling at a higher rate of speed. This does not apply to the overtaking vehicle or when a commercial motor vehicle is unable to move to the right lane safely due to other vehicles. The House approved the amendment from the Committee that removed a two-point penalty and states "for a period of 180 days after the effective date, only warning tickets may be issued for a violation."

Illegal Transportation of Feral Hogs

The **Feral Hog Transportation Bill**, [House Bill 3539](#), was heard in the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources subcommittee this week and passed favorably onto the full Senate Ag committee. SC Farm Bureau member Rachael Sharp (Allendale) testified in front of the subcommittee detailing the devastation observed on their farm this past year. The full committee debated the bill this week but carried the bill over for further considerations. SC Farm Bureau Government Relations team is deeply engaged with the committee and other members of the Senate to work with members on the language of the bill.

The State newspaper published a feral hog article, written by Sammy Fretwell, detailing the effects of feral hogs on South Carolina farms and countryside. Mr. Fretwell identified numerous issues that feral hogs create in South Carolina. The article can be found [here](#).

Below is an excerpt from the article:

"Nationally, wild hogs have expanded beyond the bottom lands of the Southeast to hills and desert areas across many states, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. An estimated 6 million are wandering through a majority of the states,

causing an estimated \$1.5 billion in property damage nationally each year, according to the USDA and the recent University of Georgia report.

Feral pigs are a destructive force because they will eat almost anything and they reproduce prolifically. Males, on average, are about 220 pounds, while females are 155 pounds, according to Mississippi State University. But the animals can grow much larger. In some cases they've reportedly approached 800 pounds.

Federal and state officials have launched multiple efforts to stop the march of hogs, including shooting pigs from helicopters and developing poisons to knock back populations. In South Carolina, the federal government, for instance, traps and kills hogs in places like [Congaree National Park](#).

Feral hogs are responsible for \$115 million in damage statewide each year and have been a growing problem for farmers. The Feral Hog Transport Bill gives law enforcement the tools needed to identify and prosecute individuals illegally transporting feral hogs. While it is currently illegal in South Carolina to transport feral hogs, it is very difficult to prove hogs are wild. This legislation would require individuals to obtain proper identification of the animals to prove their origin. An amendment was adopted that allowed additional documents be used for identification of hogs during transportation. More information on this priority issue can be found [here](#).

State Budget Update

The **House Ways and Means Committee**, chaired by Representative Murrell Smith of Sumter, approved the general appropriation bill, and the joint resolution making appropriations from the Capital Reserve Fund, which together comprise the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 state government budget. The budget includes \$9 billion in recurring state general fund revenue, after \$650 million is transferred to the Tax Relief Trust Fund that provides for the residential property tax caps. The budget's nonrecurring funds include \$36.3 million in surplus funds estimated for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, \$103 million in the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Contingency Reserve Fund, and \$176 million in Capital Reserve Funds. The House is scheduled to conduct budget deliberations the week of March 22-25. Once passed by the House, the bill will be sent to the Senate for consideration and debate.

Congressional Report

National News



EPA Administrator: Michael Regan has been confirmed by the Senate to be the 15th Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Estate Tax Repeal: Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate to repeal estate taxes. Farm Bureau support the bills. We would like to thank Congressmen Wilson, Norman and Duncan for being original cosponsors on this bill.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021: Agricultural provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 appropriate an estimated \$10.4 billion for programs designed to strengthen the agricultural and food supply chain, e.g., animal surveillance or COVID-19 mitigation efforts for agricultural workers; additional resources to purchase and distribute agricultural commodities to nonprofits, restaurants or other food-related entities; increase access to health care in rural communities; and provide debt relief and other support programs for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Climate Change Hearing: Four witnesses representing the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance's (FACA) founding organizations and co-chairs - American Farm Bureau Federation, Environmental Defense Fund, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and National Farmers Union - testified this week in front of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry on the agriculture, food and forestry sectors' role in delivering climate solutions. In accordance with FACA's guiding principles, the four representatives stressed to lawmakers that federal climate policy must be built upon voluntary, incentive-based programs and market-driven opportunities, promote resilience and adaptation in rural

communities, and be grounded in scientific evidence. In addition, solutions proposed by Congress and the Biden administration must be strongly bipartisan and accommodate the diverse needs of producers and landowners, regardless of size, geographic region or commodity.