

# South Carolina Farm Bureau State Legislative April 14, 2022

## Weekly Update



### **Senate Finance Committee Makes Quick Work of Budget Deliberation House and Senate Roll Into Easter Break Post & Courier Highlights Issues with Agricultural Property Tax Assessments**

This week's highlights include activities with media attention on agricultural property tax inconsistencies, Senate Finance budget debate and a glimpse into next week's schedule. See below for details on this week's highlights and next week's adventures!

#### **Focusing in on Senate Finance Committee Budget Deliberations**

While the House was on furlough this week, the Senate Finance Committee rolled up their sleeves and created their version of the state budget for pending Senate consideration. Led by **Senate Finance Chairman Harvey Peeler** (Senate District 14 – Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union and York Counties) along with all committee members, Senate Finance held multiple full committee meetings this week in their effort to create the state's budget for FY2022-23. The modified version of House Bill 5150 will soon be debated on the Senate floor with an eye on distributing the estimated \$4.628 B in state revenue. We will continue to monitor the progress of the budget as the session draws to a close in the coming weeks.

#### **Media Attention on Agricultural Property Taxation**

**Representative Ryan McCabe's** (House District 96 - Lexington County) **bill** received a hotly contested subcommittee hearing recently where SC Farm Bureau member **Adam Keith** (York County) attended and was poised to testify, relaying his family's story of contesting an improper county tax assessment on his property.

However, subcommittee members intensified their questioning of representatives of the Association of Counties on multiple fronts, expressing their displeasure with what they were hearing. The bill was carried over with a promise that something will be done to clarify the perceived notions on implementation of the tax law by the local governments.

Seanna Adcox of The Post and Courier **highlighted this significant issue** as it relates to counties interpreting the law as they assess taxes on agricultural properties. Below is an example of the challenges South Carolina farmers face when some county assessors are more aggressive with their interpretation of the law:

*“York County farmer Adam Keith pays \$16,000 yearly on eight turkey houses, as per a 2018 agreement resolving a four-year fight that went through the state Administrative Law Court. When he first challenged his tax bill in 2014, it was \$39,000 for six turkey houses, he said. The reduction came after he borrowed tens of thousands of dollars to pay an attorney, and the county got a new assessor, he said. “I think it’s an easy target,” Keith said about poultry houses. “They see these new buildings going up, and they’re expensive to build. But the only thing I can do with those buildings is raise birds. I couldn’t do anything else with them legally.”*

South Carolina Farm Bureau will continue to share our stories in an effort to shed a huge spotlight on what appears to be ever-expanding overreach with limited oversight. Thank you to Adam Keith for his leadership in sharing his difficult story with the subcommittee and the media, and thanks to Seanna Adcox for publishing this informative article.



The House will return from their furlough with a plate full of legislation to address with only twelve legislative days remaining before the end of the general session. We continue to monitor and actively respond to the progress of DHEC Reform and Grain and Cotton Producers Guaranty Fund bills that came over from the Senate for consideration.

The Senate will return with numerous bills in sub and full committees that made the crossover deadline. This, coupled with budget work, will take the lion’s share of focus next week and into the future. We continue to monitor the progress of the Agricultural Property Disclosure bill that came over from the House for consideration.

### [Grassroots in Action - Plug In, Weigh In](#)

Farm Bureau’s advocacy network is designed to raise awareness to key issues that impact the agriculture industry. Our grassroots members help fuel the engine that guides South Carolina’s number 1 industry, agribusiness. Farm Bureau is successful because of our engaged members that develop and cultivate these connections with elected officials that allows us to share our stories and vision for the future.

**THANK YOU to all the grassroots members that recently energized the members of the General Assembly to take positive actions on our priority agenda!**