

South Carolina Farm Bureau State Legislative Weekly Update

March 11, 2022



SC Cotton and Grain Producers Guaranty Fund Passes Committee Tax Reform Continues to Gather Steam DHEC Restructuring Bill Set for Priority Debate in Senate Wildlife Crop Control Information House GOP Leader to Retire Farmers of the Week

This week the General Assembly rounded second base heading for third as they completed week 9 of the 18-week session. This week's highlights include activity on the SC Cotton and Grain Guaranty Fund, tax reform, and a House leader announcing his impending retirement.

Next week looks to be a very busy week and starts early with the House beginning the state's budget debate on Monday and a restructuring debate primed in the Senate. See below for more details:

SC Cotton and Grain Producers Guaranty Fund Unanimously Passes Senate Committee

Subcommittee **Chairman Scott Talley** worked with the Senate Agriculture Committee to pass **Chairman Wes Climer's** (Senate District 15 representing York County) **SC Cotton and Grain Producers Guaranty Fund** legislation out of full committee this week. It now heads to the Senate floor for consideration.

S.1117 adds cotton to the state's agricultural commodities list to provide self-assessment insurance to protect against unforeseen occurrences. It also creates the South Carolina Agricultural Commodities Advisory Commission to assist the Department of Agriculture in the duties and administration of the Fund, ensures assessments are captured upfront on licensed grain dealers and cotton ginning locations, and does not change assessments on currently covered commodities.

SC Farm Bureau has been instrumental in the creation and advancement of this bill and will continue to advocate for its passage.



SCFB State Legislative Chairman **Cullen Bryant** of Dillon, along with SCFB Government Relations Director **Gary Spires**, testifying in subcommittee this week on the need for S. 1117.

Tax Reform Deliberations Passes the Senate

The Senate passed **Chairman Harvey Peeler** (Senate District 14 including Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union and York Counties) tax reduction bill labeled the “**Comprehensive Tax Cut Act of 2022**” this week. The bill now heads to the House for consideration. The legislation lowers the highest tax bracket to 5.7%, establishes the ability to deduct all military income, as well as appropriate \$1B from the Contingency Reserve Fund to the Taxpayer Rebate Fund that would provide tax rebates to all taxpayers.

S. 2 Poised for Senate Debate

Senate bill 2, the SC DHEC reform bill sponsored by Senate Finance Committee **Chairman Harvey Peeler** (Senate District 14 - Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union and York Counties), was set this week for “Special Order” status by Majority Leader Shane Massey. This procedural motion, agreed upon by the body, places the bill in a priority debate slot on the Senate calendar until an official vote is taken on the legislation.

SCFB has been following this important bill focusing on the restructuring of SC DHEC and increasing government efficiency while creating separate health and environmental state agencies, including moving all statewide water governance into one agency.

Wildlife Crop Control

As we approach the upcoming planting season, high input costs, weather and wildlife pressures will challenge farmers and crop production across our state. Where severe or persistent damage occurs, depredation permits may be issued to shoot deer at times other than legal hunting seasons. Request a permit from any South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Wildlife Management or Law Enforcement office at no cost to the applicant.

These permits are valid for 30 days and are renewable if additional time is needed to alleviate the problem. As a general rule, lethal control of deer cannot be initiated before consulting the SCDNR, which also may provide technical assistance.

You must contact the communications center and ask to speak to a local SCDNR Law Enforcement Officer about a deer depredation permit. Call 803-955-4000 to be placed in contact with a local conservation officer in your county. The officer will visit the site to verify crop damage before any permit can be issued.

Area	Phone Number
Region 1 - Clemson	864-654-1671
Region 2 - Florence	843-661-4766
Region 3 - Columbia	803-734-3887
Region 4 - Charleston	843-953-9307

House GOP Leader Representative Gary Simrill to Retire

House Majority Leader [Gary Simrill](#) (House District 46 - York County) is retiring after 30 years in the State House. His retirement will leave open a very powerful position in the House of Representatives going into the next two-year legislative session after House elections this fall. The House Majority Leader is elected by the GOP Caucus.

Simrill, known throughout the House as a listener and consensus builder has worked tirelessly for the state of South Carolina. Thank you Representative Simrill!

Bill Introductions

S.1144 – introduced by [Sen. John Scott](#) (District 19 – Richland) enacts the “South Carolina Agribusiness, Rural, and Opportunity Zone Jobs Act”. This bill provides for the creation and management of a tax credit and incentive program within the SC Department of Revenue for investments made by large and small businesses, entrepreneurs, and other investors in economically-distressed, often rural, areas in need of resurgence through agribusiness ventures. The bill was referred to Senate Finance.

SC Farm Bureau staff will continue to advocate for farmers and the agricultural industry with our daily presence at the State House while providing timely updates to our members.

Farmers of the Week

SC Farm Bureau's 2021 Youth Leadership Class



SC Farm Bureau hosted 16 students from the **2021 Youth Leadership Class** on Tuesday, March 8, 2022. The group enjoyed leadership sessions at the SC Farm Bureau office and visited the State House. Participants took part in a State House tour, learned about the House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee from Chairman Hiott, and spent time speaking to their representatives about the importance of supporting agriculture. SC Farm Bureau's Youth Leadership Conference is a four-day summer program for high school juniors and seniors designed to develop future leaders for the organization and strong advocates for the industry. This year's program is June 26-29, 2022 at the Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe.



House Agriculture Chairman Davey Hiott (House District 4 representing Pickens County)



Caroline Richards and Rep. Raye Felder
(House District 26 - York County)



Caroline Richards with Rep. Randy Ligon (House District 43 - Chester and York Counties) and **House Speaker Pro Tempore Tommy Pope** (House District 47 - York County)



Tannor Buck with Rep. Robert Williams
(House District 62 – Darlington)



Lauren Stone with Rep. West Cox (House District 10 representing Anderson, Greenville and Pickens)