



February 7, 2019

Inside this issue

This Week at the Statehouse

- [Legislative Update - Week Five](#)

Congressional Report

- [National News](#)

This Week at the Statehouse

Legislative Update - Week Five

Issue: Deer Tag System

On February 6, 2019, the House Agriculture Wildlife Subcommittee met to discuss [H. 3750](#) - a bill that would seek to take the current eight date-specific antlerless deer tags and change it to six date-specific antlerless deer tags with two antlerless deer tags that could be used at any time. There would be no change to buck tags and hunters can still purchase additional tags. SCFB was prepared to testify in support of this bill as drafted. However, an amendment was offered that would seek to get rid of all date specific tags and just give hunters two antlerless deer tags that could be used at any time. Marion Barnes testified on behalf of Farm Bureau at the subcommittee hearing stating our support for a solution that would allow for more harvest of deer to help with the devastating effects they have on crops. The concern was raised, however, that going from eight date-specific tags to only two any-time tags would limit the amount of does harvested overall. Listening to our concerns and that of others, the Subcommittee adjourned debate on the amendments and the bill to allow for additional time to discuss these issues. There will be another hearing on H. 3750 next week in which Farm Bureau will continue to be involved. Please contact us

with your thoughts about this bill.

Policy:

(S-A) 1. Deer and Wildlife Issues - When South Carolina farmers' viability is threatened due to wildlife damage, they should be allowed to deal with the wildlife like any pest that threatens a crop. Understanding that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is charged by the State of South Carolina to manage certain species of wildlife, SC Farm Bureau will work with DNR and other appropriate agencies to make sure that the farmer's livelihood is protected and our game animals are managed properly. We support a reasonable limit on antlered bucks and a deer tagging program for all deer that will enhance the management of the deer herd in South Carolina. The farmers should continue to use depredation tags to control deer herds as well as work with DNR in educating hunters to harvest the proper number of does. We also support funding for DNR to help educate landowners and farmers in dealing with wildlife issues on their property. If the DNR cannot control the wildlife damage and the farmer's livelihood is put in jeopardy by wildlife managed and owned by the state, then the state should create an indemnity bond to compensate farmers for the burden of feeding the state's wildlife. Further, maximum effort should be made to deal with damage from non-game species as well. The Department of Natural Resources should evaluate and localize our state's deer population zone by zone and work to reduce the total population in our state where the herd is at controllable levels and it is again viable to grow crops profitably.

Priority Issue: Dams Safety Program

GR staff continue to educate members of the Senate of the importance in passing [S. 107](#) - The Dams & Reservoir Safety Program bill. It is important to contact your senator to tell them to support S. 107 because it is a common sense bill that improves safety within the dam safety program, concentrates DHEC's limited resources on our significant and high hazard dams, and provides much needed relief of the financial burden placed on dam owners facing repairs from reclassification due to encroaching urban sprawl into rural areas. Please contact your senator today to share this important message!

Policy:

(SN - GP) Dams and Reservoir. South Carolina Farm Bureau supports reasonable standards concerning the construction, inspection, maintenance, and repair of all high risk pond dams.

Issue: Hemp Program

Next week, on February 13th, the House Agriculture Subcommittee will be meeting on [H. 3449](#) - a bill that directs the SC Dept. of Agriculture to be responsible for regulating hemp in

South Carolina in accordance with Federal law since the inclusion of hemp as a recognized commodity under the 2018 Farm Bill. The Department will be required to promulgate regulations to that effect. This would replace the pilot program with routine regulation of hemp in South Carolina.

SCFB supports the Department of Agriculture regulating hemp in South Carolina.

[Top](#)

Congressional Report

National News

TRUMP ASKS CONGRESS FOR USMCA SUPPORT, TARIFF POWERS: In his first State of the Union address to a divided Congress, the president talked about his signature trade achievement that's now partly in the hands of the new Democratic House majority. The new North American trade pact is one of the biggest issues on the 2019 congressional agenda.

Trump touted the so-called U.S.- Mexico - Canada Agreement as a win for farmers and manufacturers.

But Democrats have already asked for changes, including stronger enforceability of labor protections, and lawmakers on both sides have suggested there's little hope for approving the new pact while Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs on Canada and Mexico remain in place.