



January 10, 2019

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### This Week at the Statehouse

#### Legislative Update - Week One

With the beginning of the 123<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session of the South Carolina General Assembly, the South Carolina Farm Bureau government relations team has hit the ground running following the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual South Carolina Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting.

#### **Priority Policies for 2019**

##### **Priority Policy Preamble:**

There is an issue that transcends all levels of government in the US. It is an issue that affects our security as a nation and our very livelihood as farmers: Farm land and farm operation protection. To continue to feed and clothe the nation, farmers must have protection from urban sprawl, burdensome regulation, and reactionary economic policies.

The United States has had a long-standing public policy promoting the importance of agriculture as the foundation of a free and prosperous nation. The US public is generally oblivious to all the threats facing agriculture and we must depend on our elected officials to engage and save the farm.

##### **Local Government:**

We encourage all County Farm Bureau Chapters to have their membership engaged in

County and Local Government. We also encourage the County Farm Bureaus to share their local government activities among the membership of other County Farm Bureaus as well as the State office.

**State Government:**

We recommend the ongoing work of water inventories, water planning, legislation pertaining to water as well as Dams and Reservoirs be given high priority.

**National Government:**

The National Legislative Committee recommends to the SC Farm Bureau Board of directors that the following issues be priority for Congress in 2019:

1. Farm Bill
2. Hurricane Relief
3. Ag Labor - Access to legal farm labor/Adjustment of Status
4. Taxes - incentive program to be made permanent for Agriculture

**Legislation:**

**2019 Priority Issue: Dams and Reservoirs:** On January 16, 2019 at 10:30 AM in Gressette 209 there will be a hearing on the following bills: **S. 81 (Campsen)** This bill would create a new category of dams exempted from DHEC oversight - any dam larger than 25 feet but not expected to cause loss of human life and may only cause minimal property damage would no longer be a regulatory defined dam subject to DHEC oversight. **S. 107 (Campbell)** At the end of last session, SCFB testified in front of the Senate Agriculture committee detailing specific problems with the dam safety program and the legislation passed by the House at that time. The Senate committee listened to our concerns and did not move on the house legislation, but instead, Chairman Verdin promised to work over the summer to address these concerns in a meaningful way. While Chairman Verdin has moved on to chair Medical Affairs, the new Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Sen. Paul Campbell, picked up the torch and has drafted legislation that will provide more clarity for DHEC as it operates its Dam Safety Program in a way that truly focuses on those dams in the highest hazard areas as well as addressing the other concerns raised by SCFB such as the need for a refundable tax credit to help dam owners compelled to make costly upgrades to dams reclassified by DHEC. **S. 144 (Scott)** A Joint Resolution to direct DHEC to create a fund for dam owners to conduct engineering and safety studies; however, a County has to make the request for dam owner to receive the funds.

*South Carolina Farm Bureau supports reasonable standards concerning the construction, inspection, maintenance, and repair of all high risk pond dams. SCFB seeks to find a solution*

*that will maintain the safe operation of dams and reservoirs in South Carolina while seeking to ease the regulatory burden and financial burden borne by dam owners facing reclassification due the encroaching urban sprawl in once rural areas.*

**2019 Priority Issue: Water: S. 92 (Campsen)** Would seek to create a permitting regime for surface water registered users if the registered user is currently or requests to use more than 5% of the safe yield or 425 million gallons a month from the surface water source.

*South Carolina Farm Bureau will protect against undue restrictions being placed on agricultural operations' use of water.*

**2019 Priority Issue: Farm land and Farm Operation Protection: S. 237 (Fanning and McLeod); H. 3089 (McDaniel) and H. 3090 (Moss and Ligon)**: These bills seeks to pick up where we left off in 2018 on the issue of protecting farm land with conservation easements on them from condemnation unless it's the only reasonable route. It would create a judicial process for conservation easement holders to request a hearing if a condemning party seeks to condemn land through a conservation easement.

*South Carolina Farm Bureau will protect farmers from urban sprawl and unnecessary development of essential agricultural lands.*

**Hemp: H. 3449 (Hiott and Lucas)**: With hemp being included within the 2018 Federal Farm Bill, state law needs to conform accordingly. This bill seeks to give the South Carolina Department of Agriculture the responsibility of regulating hemp in South Carolina.

**CDL Truck Driver Shortage**: During the Fall, the House Education and Public Works Transportation Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Jay West, met to gather information from industry, insurance providers, and other interested parties as to the causes and challenges of the current state of CDL Truck driver shortage faced by South Carolina. Loni Rikard, Lexington Co. Farm Bureau, testified on behalf of South Carolina Farm Bureau as to the unique challenges agriculture faces in obtaining quality truck drivers and how that impacts the industry. This is an issue we expect to continue be of concern during the legislative session and SCFB will actively be participating to advocate for a solution to the truck driver shortage crisis.

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## **Other Information**

**More Happenings in this First Week of a New Two Year Session**

**South Carolina House of Representatives Organization:** Following the 2018 elections, the SC House of Representatives came to Columbia the first week of December for an organization session. At this time, the committee assignments were made. Here are the new leaders in the House:

- Speaker: James H. "Jay" Lucas
- Speaker *Pro Tempore*: Thomas E. "Tommy" Pope
- Agriculture, Natural Resources Environmental Affairs: David R. Hiott
- Education and Public Works: Merita A. "Rita" Allison
- Ethics: G. Murrell Smith, Jr.
- Interstate Cooperation: [Mark N. Willis](#)
- Invitations and Memorial Resolutions: Jimmy C. Bales, Ed. D.
- Judiciary: [Peter M. McCoy, Jr.](#)
- Labor, Commerce and Industry: William E. "Bill" Sandifer, III
- Legislative Oversight: [Wm. Weston J. Newton](#)
- Medical, Military, Public and Municipal Affairs: Leon Howard
- Operations and Management: [Garry R. Smith](#)
- Regulations and Admin Procedures: Chip Huggins
- Rules: Alan D. Clemmons
- Ways and Means: G. Murrell Smith, Jr.

**New House Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environmental Affairs Members:** The following members will be serving on House Agriculture Committee and we look forward to working with them on the many issues facing South Carolina Agriculture.

- [Hiott, David R., \*Chairman\*](#)
- [Moss, V. Stephen "Steve", \*1st V.C.\*](#)
- [Hixon, William M. "Bill", \*2nd V.C.\*](#)
- [Kirby, Roger K., \*Secy.\*](#)
- [Atkinson, Lucas](#)
- [Bryant, Bruce M.](#)
- [Burns, James Mikell "Mike"](#)
- [Chumley, William M. "Bill"](#)
- [Forrest, Cally R. "Cal"](#)
- [Henderson-Myers, Rosalyn D.](#)
- [Hewitt, Lee](#)
- [Ligon, Thomas R. "Randy"](#)
- [Magnuson, Josiah](#)

- [Martin, Richard "Rick"](#)
- [Pendarvis, Marvin R.](#)
- [Rivers, Michael F., Sr.](#)
- [Trantham, Ashley B.](#)
- [Williams, Robert Q.](#)

**South Carolina Senate Organization:** The SC Senate has reorganized to account for the loss of Sen. John Courson. At this time, the committee assignments were made. Here are the new leaders in the Senate:

- President of the Senate: Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.
- Agriculture and Natural Resources: Paul G. Campbell, Jr.
- Banking and Insurance: Ronnie W. Cromer
- Corrections and Penology: Shane R. Martin
- Education: Greg Hembree
- Ethics: Sean M. Bennett
- Family and Veterans Services: Katrina Frye Shealy
- Finance: Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.
- Fish, Game and Forestry: George E. "Chip" Campsen, III
- Interstate Cooperation: Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.
- Judiciary: Luke A. Rankin
- Labor, Commerce and Industry: Thomas C. Alexander
- Legislative Oversight: Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.
- Medical Affairs: Daniel B. "Danny" Verdin, III
- Rules: A. Shane Massey
- Transportation: Lawrence K. "Larry" Grooms

**New Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environmental Affairs Members:** The following members will be serving on Senate Agriculture Committee and we look forward to working with them on the many issues facing South Carolina Agriculture.

- [Paul G. Campbell, Jr., \*Chairman\*](#)
- [John W. Matthews, Jr.](#)
- [Daniel B. "Danny" Verdin, III](#)
- [Kent M. Williams](#)
- [Vincent A. Sheheen](#)
- [Chauncey K. Gregory](#)

- [A. Shane Massey](#)
- [J. Thomas McElveen, III](#)
- [Ronnie A. Sabb](#)
- [Wes Climer](#)
- [Mike Fanning](#)
- [Stephen L. Goldfinch](#)
- [Rex F. Rice](#)
- [Scott Talley](#)
- [George E. "Chip" Campsen, III](#)
- [Greg Hembree](#)
- [Richard A. "Dick" Harpootlian](#)