



March 8, 2019

Inside this issue

Disaster Relief (Priority Issue)

- [Disaster Relief Update:](#)

This Week at the Statehouse

- [Legislative Update - Week 9](#)

New Bills of Interest

- [Introductions of Interest](#)

Congressional Report

- [National News](#)

Disaster Relief (Priority Issue)

Disaster Relief Update:

The SC Farm Bureau Federation continues to pursue and advocate for needed federal and state financial aid for those farmers throughout the state that were impacted by hurricanes Florence and Michael.

On February 26, 2019, several U.S. Senators introduced a bipartisan disaster relief package which was cosponsored by both Senator Tim Scott and Senator Lindsey Graham. The bill ([S. 572](#)) is for a total of \$13.6 billion in disaster relief including \$3 billion for agriculture assistance. At this time, Congressional leaders are working to resolve differences between this bill and a disaster relief bill ([H.R. 268](#)) passed by the House in January of this year. The SCFB National Legislative Committee was in Washington DC this week visiting with each member

of our state delegation to stress the need and importance of Congress taking quick action. Although there is some hope to have a senate vote on the new bill by mid- March, there is no specific timeline for finalization of federal disaster relief aid.

We are also taking action at the state level and have begun conversations with key legislative members, including the Chairman of the Senate Finance committee, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Speaker of the House to provide state disaster relief similar to that provided in 2016. Most recently, a bill was introduced in the House ([H. 4209](#)) to create the " South Carolina Farm Aid Fund".

It is extremely important for your voice to be heard by both your federal and state delegation members about the importance of taking quick action to provide the desperately needed financial aid to the state farming community.

[Top](#)

This Week at the Statehouse

Legislative Update - Week 9

Priority Issue: Dams & Reservoirs

GR Staff continue to educate members of the Senate of the importance in passing [S. 107 - The Dams & Safety Program Bill](#). S. 107 will be on the agenda for the Full Senate Agriculture Committee on March 14, 2019. It is important to contact the following members of the Senate Agriculture Committee to support S. 107:

[Campbell, Paul G., Jr., *Chairman*](#)

[Matthews, John W., Jr.](#)

[Verdin, Daniel B. "Danny", III](#)

[Williams, Kent M.](#)

[Sheheen, Vincent A.](#)

[Gregory, Chauncey K.](#)

[Massey, A. Shane](#)

[McElveen, J. Thomas, III](#)

[Sabb, Ronnie A.](#)

[Climer, Wes](#)

[Fanning, Mike](#)

[Goldfinch, Stephen L.](#)

[Rice, Rex F.](#)

[Talley, Scott](#)

[Campsen, George E. "Chip", III](#)

[Hembree, Greg](#)

[Harpootlian, Richard A. "Dick"](#)

Please tell members of the Senate Agriculture Committee to vote favorably on [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!

(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.

[Top](#)

New Bills of Interest

Introductions of Interest

[H. 4169 \(Word version\)](#) -- Reps. Clemmons, Simrill, Crawford, Fry, McGinnis, Hardee, Huggins, Atkinson, G. R. Smith, Loftis, Chumley, Elliott, Morgan, B. Newton, Jordan, McCravy, Taylor, Burns, Toole, Pope, Collins, Ligon, Forrester, Davis, Sottile, Hewitt, Bailey, Johnson, Bannister, Bryant, Calhoon, Clary, Clyburn, B. Cox, W. Cox, Daning, Erickson, Forrest, Hayes, Herbkersman, Hiott, Hixon, Hosey, Hyde, Kimmons, Long, Lowe, Mack, McCoy, D. C. Moss, V. S. Moss, G. M. Smith, Spires, Stringer, Tallon, Thayer, Trantham, White and Willis: A HOUSE RESOLUTION TO MEMORIALIZE THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES TO APPROVE THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT (USMCA) IN ORDER TO ENSURE CONTINUITY IN TRADE AMONG THE THREE NORTH AMERICAN ECONOMIC PARTNERS.

AFBF Policy: Farm Bureau policy supports the U.S. government acting to protect U.S. agricultural interests in NAFTA.

[H. 4209 \(Word version\)](#) -- Reps. White, Trantham and Hiott: A BILL TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 46-1-165 SO AS TO CREATE THE "SOUTH CAROLINA FARM AID FUND" TO ASSIST FARMERS WHO HAVE SUFFERED AT LEAST A FORTY PERCENT LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES AS A RESULT OF A CATASTROPHIC WEATHER EVENT, TO PROVIDE THAT THE FUND MUST BE ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF

AGRICULTURE, TO CREATE A FARM AID ADVISORY BOARD TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS, AND TO SPECIFY ELIGIBILITY AND GRANT AMOUNTS.

(S-A) 20. Disaster Fund - SCFB recommends the establishment of a fund by the SC General Assembly, to be administered by SCDA that could assist SC Farmers when they are severely damaged by regional natural disasters (drought, flood, hurricane, etc.).

[Top](#)

Congressional Report

National News

The National Legislative Committee and President Ott were in Washington DC this week and visited with the members of our congressional delegation and their key staff. The primary topics covered were: needed federal disaster relief aid for farmers impacted by catastrophic weather events in our state, the negative impact current tariffs and trade issues are having on our farm products, and the need to address current and future farm labor needs.

The committee and President Ott also met with Mathew "Matt" Lohr, the new Chief of USDA: Natural Resource Conservation Service. The group discussed the need for increased coordination after a natural disaster and ideas for improving participation in various NRCS programs.