

This Week at the Statehouse

Legislative Update - Week 11

Priority Issue: Dams Safety Program:

[S. 107](#)- the dam safety program bill - has made it to the Senate Calendar for consideration.

Unfortunately, Senator Harpootlian has put his name on the bill, precluding it from receiving debate and to be considered at this time. It is important to contact your Senator to tell them to support [S. 107](#) and to allow it to receive debate on the floor because:

- S. 107 protects the citizens of South Carolina by focusing resources on the dams that pose the most risk by prioritizing the highest hazard dams first.
- S. 107 addresses the high financial burden dam owners face by the reclassification of their dam's hazard level with a one-time refundable tax credit. This will help dam owners make the required repairs and modifications to their dams to protect people and downstream development.

(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

The Senate and House both approved [H. 3449](#) - The SC Department of Agriculture's plan to regulate hemp in South Carolina. The Senate amended the bill, and the House concurred, to allow the 2019 licensees to cultivate more than 40 acres and to allow SCDA to issue additional hemp licenses to applicants who applied for the 2019 growing season but were denied because the department had already reached the 40-license limit. This will help the hemp industry grow in South Carolina. The next step is for Governor McMaster to sign this bill into law.

204/Industrial Hemp 1. We support the production, processing, commercialization and utilization of industrial hemp and that it be regulated by USDA rather than the DEA.

Issue: Cell-based "Meat"

The House Agriculture subcommittee met and gave a favorable report on [H. 4245](#)- a bill that would make it illegal to represent or label any cell-cultured protein as "meat" in South Carolina. Gary Spires, Director of Government Relations for SCFB, testified that this truth-in-labeling effort would protect our cattle and poultry producers. The full House Agriculture committee will consider the bill next.

342/Labeling 1. The correct nomenclature for imitation products used as substitutes for traditional

foods and fibers is an integral part of consumer protection.

Issue: Conservation Easement Protection

The House Judiciary Special Laws subcommittee held a hearing on [H. 3090](#) - a bill that seeks to protect property with conservation easements on them from being violated by a utility company seeking to use eminent domain on the property for a project. Jeff Wilson of Cotton Hills Farm testified in favor of this bill and how it would help future landowners protect their property. The subcommittee adjourned debate on the bill and is expected to take it up again at their next meeting.

(S-A) 9. Development Rights Program - We support the continued protection of the existence of farmland.

Issue: Deer Tag System

With unanimous support, the full Fish, Game, and Forestry Committee gave a favorable report on [H. 3750](#) this week - a bill that would seek to modify the doe tag system by getting rid of the eight date-specific antlerless deer days. This bill is a product of a compromise between SCFB and SCDNR. With a big game license, hunters will now receive two antlerless deer tags that can be used at any time with the option of purchasing four more additional antlerless deer tags. If a hunter purchases the four additional antlerless deer tags, then SCDNR will provide two additional antlerless deer tags to be used in game zones 3 & 4 free of charge to the purchaser which will be handled administratively by SCDNR. This bill seeks to simplify the deer tag system while still providing ample opportunities to harvest does in South Carolina. The bill will head next to the floor of the Senate for consideration.

(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.

[Top](#)

New Bills of Interest

Introductions of Interest

[S. 677](#) -- Senator Fanning: A BILL TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 27-8-85 SO AS TO REQUIRE A PERSON EMPOWERED BY LAW TO CONDEMN REAL PROPERTY MUST CONSIDER PRUDENT AND FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO CONDEMNING PROPERTY SUBJECT TO A CONSERVATION EASEMENT REGISTERED WITH THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT DATABASE BY THE HOLDER OF A CONSERVATION EASEMENT OR OWNER OF LAND SUBJECT TO A CONSERVATION EASEMENT.

Read the first time and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

[S. 11](#) - Senators Peeler, Bennett, McElveen and Young: A BILL TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 1-1-30 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY INTENDS FOR DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME TO BE THE YEAR-ROUND STANDARD TIME OF THE ENTIRE STATE SHOULD THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AMEND CERTAIN RELATED FEDERAL LAW TO ALLOW STATES TO OBSERVE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME YEAR ROUND.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary

Congressional Report

National News

Lawmakers continue to work on resolving any difference between the \$14.2 billion disaster aid spending package ([H.R. 268](#)(116) passed by the House in January and [S. 572](#) (116) introduced late last month. There is now talk of including relief for the current flooding in many Midwestern states. The Senate aiming to vote on the disaster aid bill next week when both chambers return from recess.

Talks are also continuing between the Administration and various members of Congress to gain support for the US-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement. No specific schedule has been set for congressional action at this time.