

**South Carolina Farm Bureau  
Legislative Update - Week 13  
April 6, 2023**

**In This Week's Issue**

- **Weekly Session Highlights**
- **Looking Ahead**

The House of Representatives worked long hours this week to make the April 10th crossover deadline ensuring their bills reach the Senate this legislative session for a chance at passage, just as the Senate did last week before their scheduled furlough. Any unpassed bills will not die this legislative session and will retain their positions in committee or on calendars until the start of the 2024 Session.

As the full Senate was on break this week, members of the Senate Finance Committee continued their work crafting their version of the annual appropriations bill to be taken up by the entire Senate the week of April 17.

As we review the week in the General Assembly, SCFB continues to represent you by listening to our members' concerns, challenges, and ideas while bringing those issues to light for lawmakers in SC and DC. We also encourage our members and the larger community to be active participants in all areas of government – through voting, grassroots initiatives, engaging neighbors in conversation, serving on action committees, or serving as an elected official.

*And we wish our members a blessed and Happy Easter in the days ahead.*

**Weekly Highlights**

**Legislation to Bolster SC Equine Industry Passes House**

After extended debate, the House passed **H.3514**, the SC Equine Advancement Act, this week making the crossover deadline ensuring the bill reaches the Senate before the end of this year's session. The bill, sponsored primarily by **Rep. Russell Ott** (House District 93 – Calhoun, Lexington and Orangeburg Counties) and strongly encouraged by the state equine industry, establishes the South Carolina Equine Commission and would create a formal mechanism for wagering on races around the state, utilizing the proceeds to help strengthen the struggling equine industry primarily through grants.

SC Farm Bureau supported the passage of H.3514 and received appreciation from industry leadership as well as legislators working to secure passage. H.3514 will now go through the Senate committee process for discussion.

## **DHEC Restructuring – Consolidation of Statewide Water Functions**

**House bill 4124** sponsored by **House Speaker Murrell Smith** (House District 67 - Sumter), the House version of the agency's massive restructuring, passed this week making the crossover deadline. The bill primarily separates the agency while allowing the Department of Administration to assist greatly in the process. In its current form, H.4124 does not consolidate all water-related statewide regulation into one agency. SC Farm Bureau will continue to advocate for single-agency water for efficiency and to eliminate uncertainty for future farmers.

## **SC Conservation Enhancement Act**

**House bill 3786** sponsored by **Rep. Phillip Lowe** (House District 60 - Florence) passed the House this week. The bill creates an avenue for additional recurring funding for the SC Conservation Bank by allocating a portion of state deed stamp fees on property transactions. The bill adds the Commissioner of Agriculture to the Conservation Bank Board while also requiring that a board member must possess experience in farming. These changes will provide a much-needed perspective of agricultural conservation in our state. South Carolina has seen almost 300,000 acres of production agricultural land be eliminated within the last twenty years.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

## **Senate Finance Committee Proposes Budget Recommendations**

**Chairman Harvey Peeler** (Senate District 14 - Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union, and York Counties) led the Senate Finance Committee through their appropriations bill discussion this week. The amended version of the lengthy bill, which originated in the House, will be debated on the Senate floor the week of April 17.

See below a list of several agricultural related priorities that were funded by the Finance Committee this week:

### **Department of Agriculture**

- Growing Agribusiness Fund - \$40 million non-recurring funds
- Statewide Farmers Markets Upgrade and Safety Improvements - \$3 million non-recurring funds

### **Clemson PSA**

- Animal Farms Infrastructure - \$15.5 million non-recurring funds
- Poultry Science Research Facility - \$4.5 million non-recurring funds

### **SC State PSA**

- Agribusiness Development and Expansion Support - \$2.5 million non-recurring funds
- New and Beginning Farmer Assistance - \$150k non-recurring funds
- Future Farm Planning - \$150k non-recurring funds

### **John De La Howe Governor's School for Agriculture**

- De La Howe Hall Renovation - \$2.1 million non-recurring funds
- Campus Growth - \$1.5 million recurring funds
- Agriculture Shop - \$1.3 million non-recurring funds

### ***Also, before we go . . . Iowa Comes to SC***

Recently, the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation County Presidents got an in-depth look at South Carolina agriculture during the 2023 County Presidents' Incentive Trip to our state the week of March 26-31. Read more about their visit [here](#).

### **Looking Ahead to Next Week**



After completing their work on bills to meet the crossover deadline, the House will be on furlough next week. The Senate will be tackling a full slate of bills in both committee and on the floor. Be on the lookout for our weekly updates as we continue to roll along during the 2023 General Session.