

**South Carolina Farm Bureau
Legislative Update - Week 15
April 21, 2023**

*** CALL TO ACTION - YOUR VOICE IS NEEDED NOW! ***

The future of water control in the state is at a pivotal juncture and members of the Senate Medical Affairs Committee need to hear from you asap.

- Earlier this year, Senate Finance Chairman Harvey Peeler (Cherokee) and Senate President Thomas Alexander (Oconee) introduced Senate Bill 399 that reforms the Department of Health and Environmental Control -- one of South Carolina's largest and most cumbersome state agencies which oversees everything from birth certificates to hazardous waste permits. This agency needs restructuring and streamlining to ensure farmers and businesses can stop bouncing from one agency to another looking for answers and permission to do their jobs;
- Currently, water planning and regulation in our state is split between DHEC and the Department of Natural Resources. DNR retaining any control over water planning in South Carolina is **not** in the best interest of farmers or agriculture. Their focus has never been agriculture and will not begin now;
- S. 399 is at a crucial point - a subcommittee will vote on the bill next Wednesday with the full Medical Affairs Committee scheduled to take action Thursday;
- At the heart of this government restructuring is creating efficiency and certainty for the regulated community while increasing accountability for state agencies. SC Farm Bureau wants to make sure that the bill stays this way with no amendments.

Please tell your Senator that farmers want all planning and permitting of water to be within the newly created Department of Environmental Services because:

- **Farmers need efficient one-stop access and accountability over our state's water resources;**
- **The Department of Natural Resources is not ag-focused and is not the agency to maintain the sole planning of our state's water;**
- **Part of the new Department of Environmental Services' charge is to regulate and administer the use of our state's water resources;**
- **Farmers cannot continue to be ping-ponged between state agencies on issues related to the vital use of water.**

In the separation of DHEC, all water regulation and planning needs to be within the new Department of Environmental Services, not DNR.

Please find the contact information for committee members below and let them hear from you:

Senate Medical Affairs Committee

Daniel B. "Danny" Verdin, III, *Chairman*

Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.

Brad Hutto

Shane R. Martin

John L. Scott, Jr.

Thomas C. Alexander

Tom Davis

Kevin L. Johnson

Thomas D. "Tom" Corbin

Marlon E. Kimpson

Margie Bright Matthews

Michael W. Gambrell

Sandy Senn

Richard J. Cash

Mia S. McLeod

Dwight A. Loftis

Billy Garrett

Farmers of the Week



Allen and Heidi Kellett of Kellett Farms in Greenville County were our featured *SCFB Farmers of the Week* this week and joined our team during a busy day at the State House.

A century-old, family operated beef cattle and hay production operation, Kellett Farms is located in Simpsonville. In addition to the multiple ways they serve their local community, Allen is President of the Greenville County Farm Bureau and Heidi is a busy band teacher at Greenville Middle Academy.

Allen and Heidi are outstanding representatives of agriculture in South Carolina and we are proud to call them our *South Carolina Farm Bureau Farmers of the Week*.