

South Carolina Farm Bureau Legislative Update - Week 14 April 14, 2023

While the House was on furlough this week, the Senate worked diligently on legislation that filled their calendar in preparation to tackle the annual budget bill next week. Though an unusually slower week, there were still some highlights:

Highlights of the Week

Working Ag Lands Preservation Act Moves Forward

The Senate Agriculture Committee held sub and full committee meetings this week focusing on **H. 3951**, the "Working Agricultural Lands Preservation Act." Specifically, H.3951 establishes the "South Carolina Working Farmland Protection Program" to provide permanent protection to strategically significant working farmland properties. The bill also creates a fund for qualifying projects to receive financial support.

South Carolina has seen an unprecedented amount of working agricultural property lost to development or other non-ag related purposes over the past twenty years. During the subcommittee hearing this week, SCFB Executive Director Gary Spires testified in favor of the bill, primarily sponsored by **Rep. Patrick Haddon** (House District 19 - Greenville), and informed senators on the importance of acting now to protect our state's rapidly diminishing ag and forest lands.

The full Committee amended the bill to include elements of the "SC Conservation Enhancement Act" and require the established SC Conservation Bank to absorb the grants fund proposed in the bill. The amended version received unanimous support from Committee members and was placed on the full Senate calendar for further consideration.

Federal Update

WOTUS Halted in 24 More States



A Federal District Court judge in North Dakota has issued an injunction effectively overturning the new WOTUS ruling put into effect by the Biden Administration for 24 states. South Carolina is one of those states. For more details, see the article included below:

[AFBF: Second Judge Sides With Farmers by Halting WOTUS Rule | Morning Ag Clips](#)

[Looking Ahead to Next Week](#)



The House and Senate will return to full steam next week tackling remaining legislation and continued work on the budget bill as only 4 weeks remain in the session. SC Farm Bureau's GR team will continue to monitor and advocate strongly for agriculture and our farmers as we close out this year's session.