



South Carolina Farm Bureau Federation
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Chairman Larry Martin,

I have appreciated the opportunity to serve on the SHaPE SC Taskforce. I found the process to be very educational and I enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a conversation with many diverse viewpoints.

While perhaps not the intended goal for the Taskforce, this process has brought to light the internal conflict between divisions in SCDHEC for funding, resources, and staff. Staff discussed how funding requests seem to get lost in the shuffle of agency prioritization or have to be diluted to accommodate the many different responsibilities delegated to the agency. The conclusion from the final report seems to be that *more* funding will fix this internal conflict, but I cannot express my support for the conclusions of the final report of the SHaPE SC Taskforce. First, I believe the appropriate process for determining funding needs for an agency falls under the process and purview of the General Assembly, and we will gladly take part of that process at the appropriate time. Second, this process has only convinced me more of the need for structural change within SCDHEC. I believe that the time has come for the agency to be split between its public health and environmental functions.

I believe that the functions of state agencies should be streamlined, efficient, and provide certainty to the regulated community, and I do not believe SCDHEC is currently living up to that expectation. I do not believe this is a reflection of leadership – Dr. Simmer has been very responsive to issues we have raised affecting our farmers and we have been encouraged by his leadership since confirmed by the SC Senate. I believe this is the result of a state agency that is too big, too cumbersome, and has too many delegated responsibilities for one leader to manage. I believe that until the structure of the organization is addressed, there will continue to be external and internal agency competition for limited resources, duplication of efforts, and inefficiencies that cost the regulated community.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of the SHaPE Taskforce. I look forward to having an ongoing discussion about how to best maximize state resources to improve the quality of life for all South Carolinians by protecting and promoting the health of the public and the environment.

Respectfully,

Gary Spires

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