

MEMORANDUM

TO: Environmental Subcommittee for Shape SC Task Force

FROM: Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director SCDNR

Greetings subcommittee members. I wanted to follow up on last meeting's comments by our colleague Harold Mitchell regarding an apparent lack of understanding of the unintended consequences of the legislation which reorganizes SCDHEC.

As most of you are aware, SCDNR is the chief advocate for and stewards of our precious natural resources, with water being arguably our most important natural resource. One of our primary missions is to provide reliable scientific information to decision makers.

The legislation contemplates transferring the "water division" of SCDNR to a new Environmental Department. There is actually no separate "water division" at DNR. We have a hydrology section within our Earth Sciences group, which is part of our Land, Water and Conservation Division. While updating the State Water Plan is a major priority of the DNR and the Land, Water and Conservation Division, it is not just water planning that we are concerned about at DNR. The hydrology group is interwoven into many of our programs, and they provide vital data and assistance to support the mission of the DNR, including:

STATE CLIMATE OFFICE

SC DROUGHT RESPONSE COMMITTEE

FLOOD MITIGATION PROGRAM

SCENIC RIVERS PROGRAM

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM

AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES PROGRAM

WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES PROGRAM

HERITAGE TRUST LAND ACQUISITIONS AND HABITAT PROTECTION PROGRAMS

FERC RELICENSING REVIEW PROGRAM

ENVIRONMENTAL AND PERMIT REVIEW PROGRAMS

LAW ENFORCEMENT (PRIOR TO, DURING AND FOLLOWING SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS)

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

So, there is no way to simply remove the hydrology group from DNR without stripping the department of its ability to continue our mission and greatly diminishing our ability to support

all of these programs. It would be extremely challenging to perform these duties without an in-house hydrology group.

We would also like to point out that we are in the middle of a planning cycle, making major progress and have built a very strong coalition of partners who are working together better than ever, including SCDHEC, Clemson University, consultant CDM Smith, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey and the State Water Planning Advisory Committee (PPAC). The PPAC strongly supports this effort and consists of the following members:

Dr. Jeff Allen of Clemson University's Water Resource Center

David Baize of SCWWA/WEASC

David Bereskin of Greenville Water

Jesse Cannon of Santee Cooper

Fred Castles of Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group

Clay Duffie of Mt. Pleasant Waterworks

Steve Hamilton representing the golf industry.

Erika Hollis of Upstate Forever

J.J Jowers, Bamberg County citizen member

Eric Krueger of The Nature Conservancy

Jeff Lineberger of Duke Energy

Jill Miller of the S.C. Rural Water Association

Dean Moss, Citizen member and former Manager of Beaufort Jasper WSA

Myra Reece of SCDHEC

Bill Stangler of Congaree Riverkeeper

Landrum Weathers Farmer

Scott Willett of Anderson Regional Water System

Charles Wingard of Walter Rawl and Sons Farm

Removing the water planning role from DNR at this stage in the state's investment in this work would have the unintended consequence of increasing inefficiency in state government and losing momentum in an effort that many organizations and partners have already invested important time and resources thus far.

It is also important to note that stripping the state's lead natural resource agency of its critical role in water and placing the water planning and management role and water-related regulatory role within one agency would undermine public trust. Currently, as a non-regulatory body, DNR stewards water planning and science initiatives as a neutral entity and considers all water uses, not just the regulated community. This maintains trust in the agency among all water users and removes any perception that the agency is motivated to support specific regulatory or enforcement-related outcomes.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER RESOURCES AT SCDNR



Water is one of South Carolina's most precious resources, underpinning much of the state's culture, economy and natural beauty.

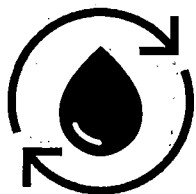


Boating, fishing and swimming are more than pastimes – they're part of South Carolina's cultural heritage and are shared from one generation to the next.



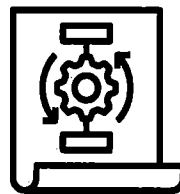
Industry, agriculture and other key drivers of the South Carolina economy depend on well-studied and reliable water resources.

For nearly three decades, SCDNR has worked to ensure the state has a reliable supply of clean water and drought/flood predictions.



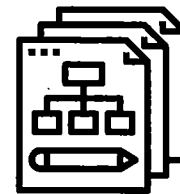
The goal of water planning is to determine

where water is located and how much there is – and then to equitably balance South Carolina's water resources with its needs, ensuring clean water will be available to sustain all future uses.



To best manage the state's water resources, SCDNR staff:

- conduct extensive water monitoring at ~180 wells
- delineate and monitor the state's aquifers
- forecast demands up to 50 years in the future
- use computer modeling for surface and groundwater assessments
- conduct water studies across the state



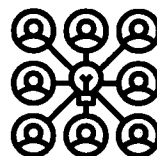
New 'River Basin Plans' will take a grassroots approach to

empower people from each of South Carolina's eight major river basins to proactively manage their water, starting with a pilot program in the Edisto River Basin. Together, these plans will help inform the overall State Water Plan.

Many SCDNR programs would be challenged to fulfill their missions in the absence of an in-house water program.



In-house water data is critical to law enforcement, climatologists and many others for natural disaster preparation, response and recovery, flood/drought mitigation and envr. review and FERC relicensing.



SCDNR's water program has built a robust coalition of partners who share concerns that restructuring will delay the State Water Plan update in progress.