



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

March 24, 2005

The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander
South Carolina Senate
610 Gressette Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Senator Alexander,

I am writing to let you know of my reasons for signing S. 223, a bill which abolishes the Westminster Commission of Public Works (CPW) and transfers those responsibilities to the Westminster City Council. This act addresses the need for a less fragmented and outdated government.

State law provides that CPWs such as Westminster be abolished by a unanimous resolution of its commissioners, but CPW members refuse to eliminate their own positions. Even though the Westminster voters were generally dissatisfied with the CPW form of governance, they had no viable outlet for change. Compounding that dissatisfaction, Westminster recognized that the city is responsible for CPW's \$22 million share of the long-term debt on the Catawba Nuclear Plant, and despite the city's responsibility for the debt, the management and oversight rested with another entity. Because the Westminster voters were shut out of the process for dissolving the Commission, they very decidedly voiced their views in a referendum vote of 582-249 in favor of abolishing the CPW.

Over the last three years, I have worked hard to ensure that any bill that crosses my desk does not circumvent a reasonable process already in law. However, we think that a process tailored to the interest of a local entity's self-preservation – instead of the wishes and best interests of the taxpayers it serves – does not meet the test of a reasonable process and contradicts a more valued principle born out of home rule. We would be inclined to support a process that strengthens home rule and maximizes local voters' control over purely local issues.

Again, we appreciate your work to honor the will of the people of Westminster, because in our view, it underscores that the people of South Carolina are no longer satisfied with a fragmented, outdated system of government. Thanks and take care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Mark Sanford".

Mark Sanford

MS/as

cc: Members, Westminster City Council
The Honorable C. F. Green