

February 16, 2015

509 Tanager Road
North Augusta S.C. 29841

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, S.C. 29201

Governor Haley:

Congratulations for being elected to a second term as governor of our fine state. Your dedication and accomplishments during your first term are unprecedented. I look forward to more continued growth and progressive leadership. You are doing a great job.

During your recent acceptance speech, you addressed concerns and enhancements for two state departments that concern me as a tax paying citizen, Social Services and Transportation.

If you will allow me, I will provide some personal background information that will better explain my position regarding these agencies. I grew as a hard working farm boy in western Edgefield County and worked for forty plus years in industry, in both production and manufacturing engineering management, where we operated on a profit and loss basis. Out of necessity to survive, everyone in our company was required to be frugal in every way, and this behavior is part of who I am. Having worked hard all my life, I believe everyone controls their own destiny depending on their desire to be successful and work ethic. My experiences enable me to evaluate true workmanship quality and productivity.

As for the Social Services Department, I applaud your initiatives to better train our work force to enable them to be self supportive. Good luck! A comprehensive follow through for this program will be paramount to its success. Concerns I have with our current Social Services Department are: (1) a number of persons receiving assistance are capable of working. I think cases should be reopened periodically for reinvestigation. In addition, more than one doctor should be required to certify someone as disable, and stiff penalties should also be in place for anyone caught abusing the system. (2) I support child welfare services, but there should be a limit to the number of children one mother can obtain assistance for. In order to help someone improve, they must first want to help themselves.

As for the Transportation Department, excluding the Highway Patrol, this is one of the worst managed operations I have ever witnessed. The work ethic and wasteful use of materials and resources are deplorable. This opinion is common throughout the state, whether anyone will admit it to you or not. For what it's worth, I will share some constructive improvement suggestions:

1. Privatization of mundane tasks will reduce state payroll, retirement, and insurance expenses. As you travel throughout our state you can observe multiple trucks, with one person riding in each, and all going to the same destination. Why do they have to ride in separate vehicles? This applies to hourly workers as well as engineers and supervisors. Should, by chance, you catch one person working, others will be standing around just watching. It is not unusual to see a highway employee napping on the side of a country road.

2. Employ competent personnel, with competitive salaries to design, build, and maintain roads and bridges that will accommodate current load requirements. Improved salaries will make these jobs more desirable thus attracting greater talent and create competitiveness for the positions. As a rule, productivity for highly desirable jobs is higher than the lesser desirable ones. We get what we pay for! I observe the same pot holes and sinks in roads being repetitiously repaired month after month. (Insanity is the act of continuing to do the same thing with expectations of different results.) Applying tar and gravel to a hole in the road without correcting the supporting base surface is a waste.
3. Large overloaded trucks are primarily responsible for destroying our roads and they should be held accountable for damages: (a) Increase their tag and fuel fees (b) Provide each municipality and/or county with training to monitor overloaded trucks, and allow them to keep enough of the revenue fees to make their efforts worthwhile. Our current scale monitoring program is not capable of covering all the territory necessary to properly enforce weight regulations. There should be a state wide progressive penalty system to curtail overloading. Make the first fine five hundred dollars and double it each time an individual gets caught. This will drastically curtail overloading.
4. A comprehensive study should be conducted to compare the number of licensed vehicles in the state to the number of property taxpayers. Increased vehicle taxes and taxes related to vehicle use have the potential to generate enough revenue to eliminate real property taxes, while affording more state dollars for roads. If a vehicle is allowed on public roads, excluding farm tractors, they should require a state tag. (bicycles, golf cars, scooters, etc.) If you want to dance, you should not mind paying the fiddler! Think of how many persons own vehicles compared to property owners. These revenues could be split between the state and local governments.

Another area of concern to me is the Edgefield County Water Authority which has been in existence for approximately forty-five years. It currently provides services to areas of Aiken and Saluda Counties; however, I am not certain as to the extent in each. My concern is that the people on the North and West sides of Edgefield County have been deprived of public water, while other counties benefit from it. Fortunately, my property in Edgefield has plenty of well water, but others do not. Not only would this service provide safe drinking water, but improved fire protection as well. Passed efforts by others to work through local personnel to address this issue have fell on deaf ears—most of the people in power (state delegation, county council, and water authority members) already have access to public water, and it is not important to them. Their standard answer is “We don’t have any money!” When asked, “What are you doing to get money?”, You get a dumb look and even dumber answer, if one at all! It would not be rocket science to increase each water bill by one to two dollars a month and accrue this money for capital expansion projects. If you could shed some light on this matter and offer suggestions, the citizens of north and west Edgefield County would appreciate it.

Thanks very much for time and considerations.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert C. Timmerman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert C. Timmerman