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National Champions Visit Governor

GAFFNEY, S.C. -- In honor of their 2014 national championship season, the Limestone men's lacrosse team was introduced to South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley on Tuesday morning at the S.C. State House.

After singing Happy Birthday to the Governor, the team presented her with a personalized Limestone lacrosse jersey along with other gifts. Despite a busy schedule preparing for

the State of the State address, Gov. Haley took time to take pictures with the team and staff.

Team members were then given a personal tour of the State House before being introduced

and recognized on the floor of the House of Representatives. Along with the team, Limestone president Dr. Walt Griffin and Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics Mike Cerino were introduced.

Senator Harvey Peeler was there to greet the team and assist with the tour and introductions. Representatives Steve Moss and Dennis Moss were also on hand to represent the lacrosse team on the House floor.

Limestone lacrosse, the only team from South Carolina to win a national championship last year, concluded their trip with a private lunch with local representatives.

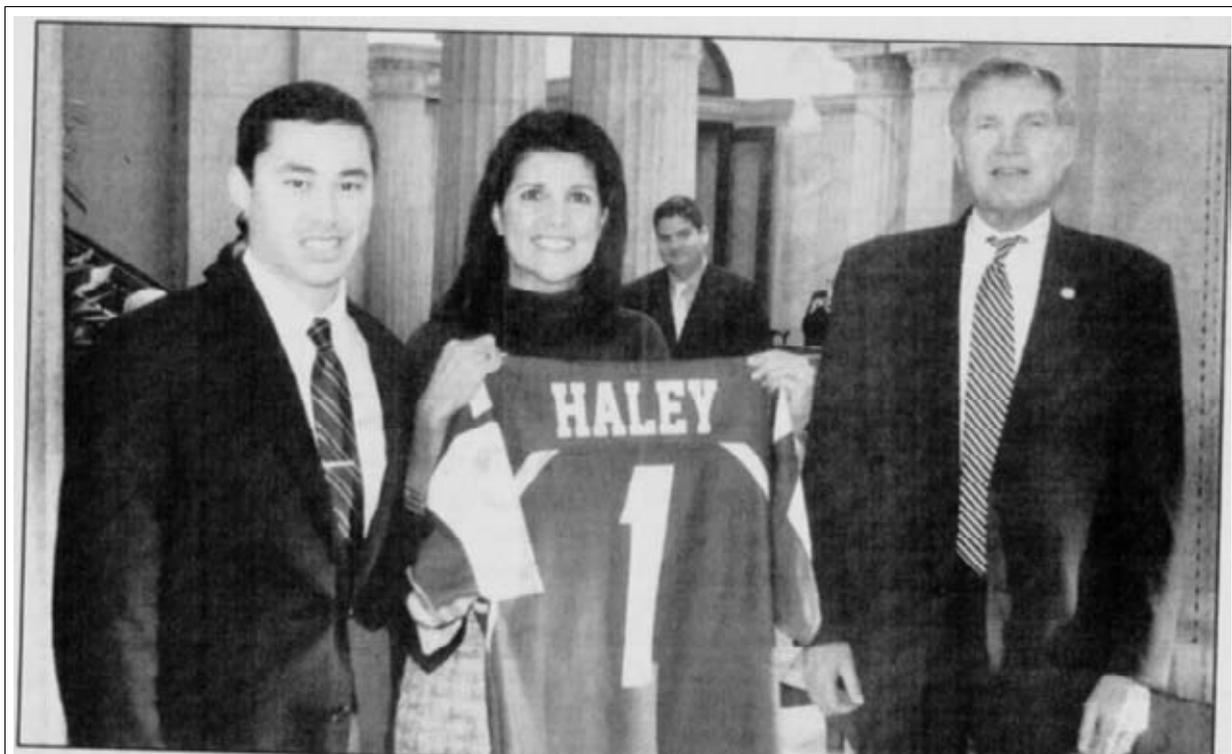


Limestone's men's lacrosse team was recognized by Sen. Harvey Peeler and Governor Nikki Haley (center) on Tuesday. (Limestone Photos)





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Limestone's Todd Nakasuji presents a customized Saints jersey to Gov. Haley as Sen. Harvey Peeler watches. Representatives Steve Moss and Dennis Moss were also on hand to represent the lacrosse team.

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LIMESTONE LACROSSE HONORED – The National Champion Limestone College Lacrosse Team was honored by Gov. Nikki Haley and the SC Legislature Tuesday. Team members are shown here on the Capitol steps along with Rep. Steve Moss (middle left), and (left to right, back right), Rep. Eddie Tallon, Limestone President Dr. Walt Griffin, Sen. Harvey Peeler and Rep. Dennis Moss. See story, additional photos inside. (Limestone Photo)

148 The moral test of government in SC

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Last week, Gov. Nikki Haley was sworn in for her second four-year term and a new legislature convened in the Statehouse. This seems like an appropriate time to look back on their record over the last four years.

Gov. Haley delivered a short Inaugural Address in which she laid out her ideas for the next four years. This caused me to begin to think about the standards and measures we use to evaluate what government does and what it ought to do.

In short: What is the test by which we should judge what government should do?

In thinking about what would be a good standard, I began by Googling a number of terms, such as "economic test of government," "accountability test of government," "effectiveness test of government," and "moral test of government."

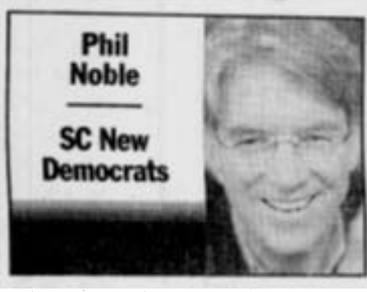
Most of these searches turned up lots of items, none of which were particularly useful. The last search turned up a quote from Hubert Humphrey that I had heard long ago but forgotten.

"The moral test of govern-

ment," Humphrey said, "is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

What a wonderful idea — and a wonderful standard to measure what government is doing. So let's apply this standard and the standard of her own words in her Inaugural Address to Gov. Haley's past four years in office.

Test one: "...those who are in the dawn of life, the children."



In her Inaugural Address, Haley said, "In the South Carolina I dream of, a daughter of Dillon starts each day with the same hope and possibilities as a son of Greenville."

Last month, Gov. Haley filed a motion with the SC Supreme Court asking them to overturn their recent decision in the Abbeville education case. After 21 years of litigation, the SC Supreme Court ruled that students in the plaintiff districts were not even receiving the "minimally adequate" education to which they are entitled under previous Supreme Court rulings, and ordered the governor and the legislature to act expeditiously to begin to fix the problem.

One of the plaintiff counties where the schools were ruled so inadequate was ... Dillon.

After the above line in Gov. Haley's address, she said, "In that South Carolina, a single mother of two feeling stuck in her job knows that if she wants it, a better opportunity is wait-

ing just around the corner."

But for that "single mother of two feeling stuck in her job," the court-ordered child support from her children's father is vital. And the Haley administration has failed to ensure she gets it.

South Carolina is the only state in the union that does not have an adequate computer system to track the earnings of "deadbeat dads" across county lines to ensure that they pay their child support. In fairness to Haley, the system has been broken since before she came to office but in her four years she has not given it sufficient priority to get it fixed. Every other state in the union has figured it out, but not South Carolina and we have paid more than \$100 million in Federal fines for this failure.

Yes, you read that right — more than \$100 million in fines ... and the problem continues today under Gov. Haley.

Test Two: "...those who are in the shadows of life, the sick..."

Gov. Haley didn't say anything about health care in her Inaugural Address, nothing at all. This is really not too surprising given what she has done, or more importantly has not done, on health care in the last four years.

What she has done is turn down \$11 billion in federal funding to expand Medicaid in South Carolina. Yes, that's a 'b' as in billion. This is not the place for a long discussion of federal health care policy, but the simple fact is that this \$11 billion would have provided health care for 500,000 of our friends and neighbors who need health care and can't afford it.

And this \$11 billion would have created tens of thousands of jobs for health care and construction workers and a whole lot more. Her actions did

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Moral

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not raise or lower our taxes by one penny, but it did ensure that the tax money we paid into the system to fund the expansion went to other states — she gave our health care dollars to other states.

Test Three: "...those that are...needy..." Gov. Haley didn't say anything about the needy in her Inaugural Address. But she will have to say something soon — in a court of law.

Last week, she and the state of South Carolina were sued over widespread deficiencies in the child foster-care system. The suit says that the system has endangered thousands of children, many of whom were dehumanized, belittled and abused. The suit received national media attention; National Public Radio cited "years of high-profile problems including the death of five children."

Test Four: "... those that are...handicapped". Once again, Gov. Haley didn't say anything in her Inaugural Address about these folks, nor did she say anything about the recent suit where Judge Michael Baxley ruled against the state prison system for its treatment

of the mentally handicapped.

The Judge's ruling detailed the treatment of the handicapped in SC prisons: "... inmates have died in the SC Department of Corrections for lack of basic mental health care and hundreds more remain substantially at risk for serious physical injury, mental decompensation, and profound permanent mental illness." That is the proper, anti-septic legal language of a judge; this is the language of one journalist describing one case: "... mentally ill inmates are routinely caged (naked) for days in their own feces and urine, having to literally eat where they ****"

And what has Gov. Haley done or said to deal with these problems since the Judge's ruling? Nothing that we have been able to find.

So, I'll leave it to you, the people of South Carolina, to make your own evaluation of Gov. Haley's score on the moral test of government.

One thing she did say: "It's a great day in South Carolina."

The question is, for whom?

Phil Noble is a businessman in Charleston and president of the SC New Democrat, an independent reform group started by former Gov. Richard Riley. He can be reached at phil@scnewdemocrats.org.

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148 **A student ministry relaunch**

John Harmon of the First Baptist Church Ministry said "The New Year brings new opportunities to re-launch our student ministry." It is time to look at our purpose statement that defined our ministry and update it. This statement will be written by the students, that will be revealed to the church.

Everyone is looking forward to the chili-pepper trip. "Thanks" to everyone who supports our fundraisers that make our big trips affordable.

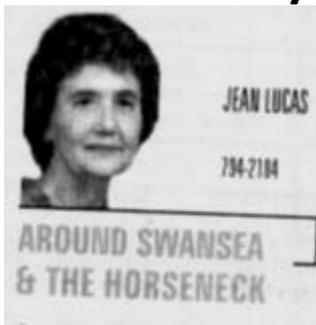
Rev. Terry Wilder, pastor of the church enjoyed a hunting trip with his good friend, Ron in Mexico.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHNATHON SUTTON of Swansea High School who participated in the All American Bowl in California January 4, 2015. He was selected by marines of the East Squad.

FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH CORDIALLY invites you to "Winter Revival" Sunday Feb 15 - Wednesday Feb. 18.

Four speakers, four topics: Sunday night - Rev. Jim Fanning, Monday night - Rev. John O'Cain, Tuesday night - Rev. Lucius Smith, Wednesday night - Rev. Larry Harrison.

RICHARD HAMPTON THORNTON OF St. Matthews has written a book entitled "The



Way It Was" a few excerpts: Chatting Back and Forth; "We did not have electricity or water in our house instead we drew water from a well and used kerosene lamps or lanterns for light. I remember lying in bed at night and talking back and forth without electricity. It was easier to talk

while lying in bed instead of sitting in a poorly lit room by lantern. Our evenings were spent mainly chattering back and forth from bed rooms."

And Making Do: "Because we had very little money, Grandma made many of the things that she needed. She made her own soap and I often helped her. We took some fat from meat and mixed it with lye in a washpot in the backyard. We had to be careful handling the lye because the chemical could blind you. After the soap settled we cut it into block-size pieces and stacked them neatly for future use."

GOD'S BLESSINGS IN THIS new year as Governor Nikki Haley and other state officials continue to guide and lead us in 2015.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY KAYLA RUCKER, Christine Russell, Chelsea Calvert, Rev. Bruce Rucker, Ashea Jones, Mary Pittman, Josh Jeffcoat, Joe Sharpe, Thomas Jumper, Pam Saylor, John Sturkie, Colton Williams, Kurt Wyndham, David Derrick, Crystal Pernell.

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Governor sees 4 challenges in 2nd term

BY JERRY BELLUNE

jerrybellune@yahoo.com

Gov. Nikki Haley's targets for the next four years are:

- More jobs from economic development;
- A better education for children across the state;
- Badly-needed repair and maintenance of roads; and
- Restoring lost trust in government officials.

In her second inaugural address last week, the state's first female, first Indian-American governor laid out the challenges.

"Four years ago, I spoke of serious

economic difficulties and the largest budget shortfall in state history.

"Today, our economy is among the fastest growing in the nation. Our people have more jobs than ever."



Haley

Haley said state government is more responsive and people are less dependent on its assistance.

"We have stood tall against a federal government insistent on making it harder for our people to achieve the American dream," she said.

She called on lawmakers to clean their own house.

"The revelation of the misuses of

public funds, public office and, worst of all, the public trust, have shaken the very soul of our state," she said in reference on the disgrace of Lt. Gov Ken Ard, House Speaker Bobby Harrell and other elected officials.

"To date, much of the debate in the chambers behind me has been wrongly focused, with too much concern for the comfort of elected officials and too little for protecting the public.

"We are a fiercely proud state," she said, "a state with a history as rich as it is complicated, a state where the intensity of our individualism is surpassed only by the shared joy we draw from being, collectively, South Carolinians."



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148 **How lawmakers waste our road money**

Gov. Nikki Haley had it right in her inaugural speech last week. South Carolinians and many Americans no longer trust their government.

We see the excesses of how our taxes are spent by both state and federal officials.

Republicans are supposed to be the more conservative watchdogs on spending. But many of them in Columbia and Washington see only one way to deal with citizen's criticism of the condition of our roads and the congestion spawned by rapid population growth.

They see the low gas prices we have enjoyed these last few

weeks as a window through which to raise your state and federal gas taxes.

We pay 35.2 cents a gallon in state and federal gas taxes.

That means we pay \$5.28 in taxes for every 15 gallons we pay at the pump.

If you fill up every week as most of us do, you send almost \$275 in taxes a year to the state and federal governments.

The gas tax raisers seem to think we won't notice an extra 10 or 15 cents more since gas prices are down 40% on average from last year.

They argue that they will invest this windfall in roads.

Don't be fooled.

A convenient excuse for a tax increase will be in May when a temporary federal highway funding measure expires.

This plus low gas prices will be used to justify raising taxes.

We agree with conservatives who champion reforming the way lawmakers spend both gas and vehicle sales taxes.

Right now, this vast source of revenue flows into state and federal general funds where it can be spent on pork projects to keep public officials in office.

The gas tax was supposed to be a user fee paid by those who use our roads to maintain and

repair roads. But it's foolish to raise gas taxes without any serious spending reform

Much of the tax money we pay at the pump isn't going to repair roads and bridges.

Raising gas taxes, like the recent failed attempt to raise sales taxes, will hurt working families and those on fixed incomes.

We cannot continue to send all gas and vehicle sales tax money to the general fund where lawmakers can spend it on things other than roads.

Lawmakers must be held accountable and the money go to repair roads and bridges .

— JerryBellune@yahoo.com



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148 Supreme Court to settle controversy over 2 same-sex marriage issues

BY ROB COTTINGHAM
cottinghamrob@yahoo.com

Two key same-sex marriage issues will be addressed sooner than predicted by U.S. Supreme Court.

On Friday, Jan. 16, U.S. Supreme Court announced it will be looking into those issues in April, addressing cases ruled on by S.C. federal judges in November 2014.

The first is the ruling on same-sex marriage levied by Judge Richard Gergel of Charleston.

Gergel ruled in late November that plaintiffs Colleen Condon and Nichols Bleckley, a lesbian couple from Charleston, were protected by the 14th Amendment and should thus be allowed to marry.

The ruling sent shockwaves across a state where same-sex marriage had long faced staunch opposition.

Since that ruling, gay marriage has widely been considered legal in S.C.

That same month, Judge Michelle Childs of Columbia ruled in favor of a Lexington couple who also challenged the state's same-sex marriage laws.

Katherine Bradacs and Tracie Goodwin were married in Washington, D.C.

Childs ruled that S.C. must, in fact, recognize valid marriages between same-sex couples conducted outside the state.

Lawyers involved in the two S.C. cases said the move makes sense, as it will promptly put an end to the ongoing controversy.

The decision to expedite the process seems to stem from conflicting ruling in different federal courts.

S.C. Attorney Alan Wilson has cited the 6th Circuit Court's recent decision to maintain a ban on same-sex marriage in his continued effort to fight the November rulings.

Wilson and Gov. Nikki Haley remain highly opposed to the changes, vowing to fight on behalf of South Carolinians and the state's constitution.

"We have always expected the U.S. Supreme Court to take up this issue," Wilson said on Jan. 16. "Until the court resolves this important question there can be no finality. We are pleased the Supreme Court is hearing this case."

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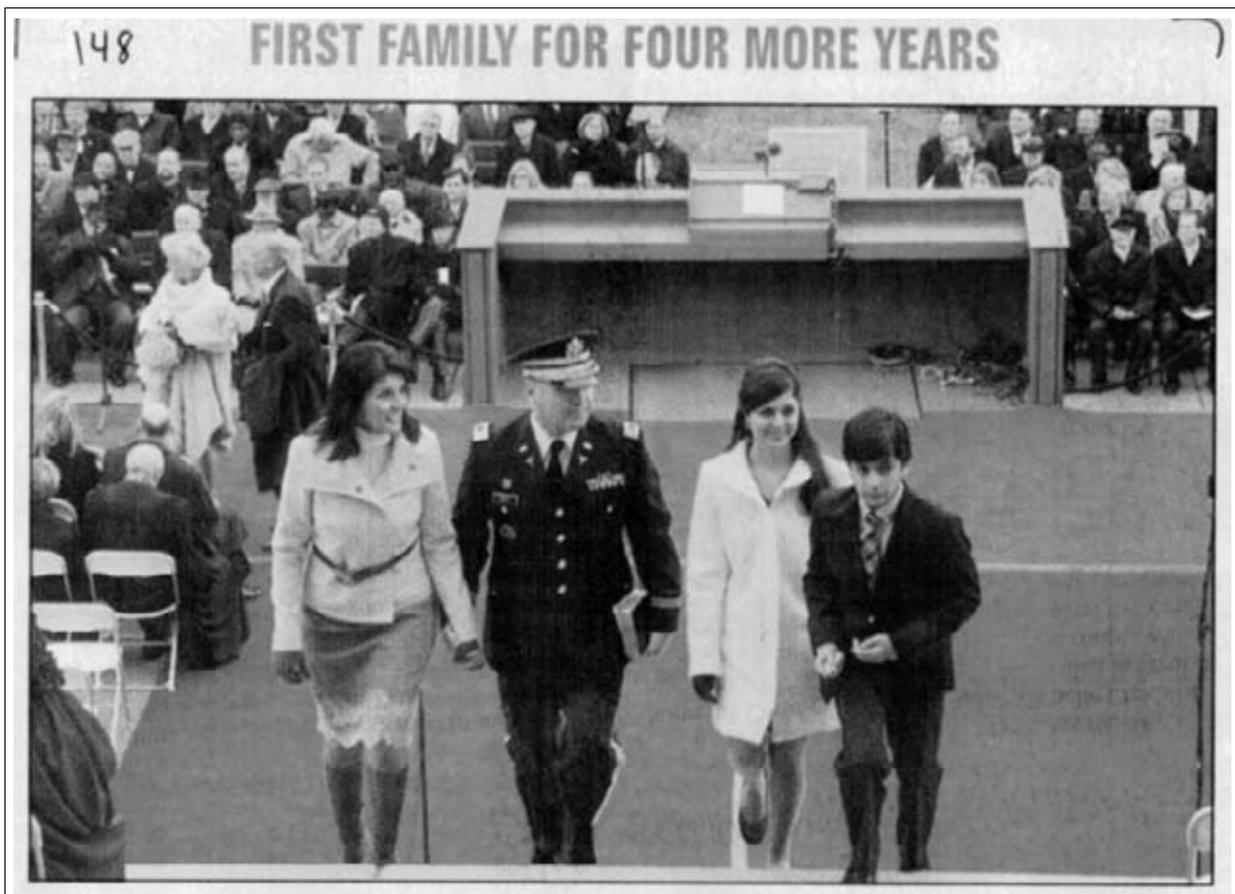


PHOTO FOR THE CHRONICLE BY SAM HOLLAND

Our state's first female governor, Nikki Haley, and her family — First Gentleman Michael, daughter Rena and son Nalin — mount the steps to the State Capitol after her second inaugural last week. The family will live another four years in the Governor's Mansion before returning to their home in Lexington. See what challenges the returning governor said she looks forward to tackling in her second term, Page A3.



Regulators: Haley plan for landfill falls \$2.4M short

BY CAMMY EDWARDS

BY SAMMY FRETWELL

The State

COLUMBIA — Gov. Nikki Haley’s plan to manage a closed toxic waste dump that threatens Lake Marion falls \$2.4 million short of what state environmental regulators said is needed to keep the contaminated site secure.

Haley’s executive budget, released earlier this month, recommends \$1.5 million to maintain the landfill near Pinewood in Sumter County, but state regulators said the site needs \$3.9 million.

Funds established years ago to pay for landfill management are virtually depleted, and taxpayers are being called on to pick up the tab. The 38-year-old landfill’s longtime operator declared bankruptcy and closed the dump in 2000, leaving a financial settlement that today is proving inadequate to pay for maintenance.

Now, the question is how much taxpayers will have to spend annually to maintain the site so that leaking chemicals don’t trickle into groundwater and Lake Marion. The lake is one of the state’s top recreation spots and a source of drinking water for thousands of people.

The amount that ends up in the final state budget won’t be decided until this spring.

Haley’s office didn’t address directly why the governor is seeking less than the Department of Health and Environmental Control is asking of lawmakers. But her press secretary issued a one-sentence statement indicating that the site warrants

further evaluation.

“Gov. Haley’s executive budget acknowledged that Pinewood must be maintained until a more durable evaluation of the site’s needs is complete and a permanent fund source can be identified,” according to the statement from press secretary Chaney Adams.

DHEC has hired a consulting firm to conduct an assessment of the property.

The \$50,000 study, targeted for completion later this year, is expected to look at future state financial liability and the pollution threat the dump presents to Lake Marion and groundwater, an agency spokesman confirmed Friday. The amount proposed by the governor is considered recurring money that would be in the budget annually, an official familiar with the proposal said.

Money to maintain the site typically is spent removing toxic water that builds up in the landfill, monitoring for leaking chemicals, and operating a storm water management system, among other things.

Two months before resigning as DHEC director, Catherine Templeton told the agency board that South Carolina needs more than \$3 million from the Legislature in the next year. The agency’s budget request for next year puts the amount at \$3.9 million, DHEC spokesman Jim Beasley said Friday. That would be recurring money that would be in the budget annually, he said. A one-time amount of \$2 million was included in the

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current state budget, he said. "We have asked the Legislature because that money is running out," Templeton told the DHEC board at its Nov. 13 meeting. "When I say running out – the next year, we have a problem."

Templeton quit as DHEC director Jan. 8 and has been unavailable for comment since. Agency officials say the site simply costs more to run than the bankruptcy settlement projected.

Rep. Murrell Smith, R-Sumter, said Templeton's departure could hamper efforts to get funding for the Pinewood landfill. She alerted lawmakers to the money problem early in 2014 and had pledged to push for more funding.

"I saw Catherine as an advocate and ally on how we handle Pinewood," Smith said.

The DHEC board's nominee to replace Templeton, Eleanor Kitzman, has not been confirmed by the Senate and faces an intense review that could drag into late winter.

According to last year's estimates, the annual average operating shortfall for maintenance had been about \$4.6 million since the bankruptcy in 2000. The bankruptcy settlement had left an annuity that generated a little more than \$1 million a year, but it was costing \$5.8 million to operate the site, the agency said last year.

DHEC offered a different estimate Friday, showing that the landfill costs about \$4.8 million annually to operate, maintain and monitor.

Smith said funding for the

Pinewood landfill will be discussed this week at a meeting of a House budget subcommittee that he chairs.

Sen. Hugh Leatherman, who chairs the Senate Finance Committee, said he isn't sure how much money the state should set aside for Pinewood, but he'll support "whatever is needed – whether it is one-point-something million or three-point-something million, or something greater than that.

"We have got to protect our environment."

Smith and Leatherman, R-Florence, agreed that the Pinewood dump is a liability the state must take on because South Carolina leaders were not diligent enough in the past to prepare for the eventual maintenance and cleanup costs.

The 279-acre Pinewood landfill, established in 1977 at the site of an old cat litter mine, grew steadily into a major destination for hazardous waste from across the nation until it shut down in 2000. Millions of tons of industrial garbage, laden with toxic chemicals, were dumped in the old mine from businesses and governments.

DHEC, charged with protecting groundwater and the lake from the dump, permitted the landfill after a former top state waste regulator took a job with the the dump's operator.

During the height of operations, the landfill's owner, Laidlaw Environmental Services, was among the most high-profile companies in South Carolina, employing

some 600 people and wielding great influence in the state Legislature. The company's national headquarters were in Columbia.

The landfill, however, was just a few football fields distant from the nearly pristine Sparkleberry Swamp and popular Lake Marion. That proximity prompted growing concern from area residents and environmentalists that it would one day pollute drinking water and one of the state's most treasured natural areas.

As a result, the DHEC board in 1994 agreed to require that Laidlaw put up a \$133 million cash trust fund to pay for cleanup work at the site. Laidlaw resisted and began pressuring state leaders to let it post other forms of financial assurance. The DHEC board then backed down and the state received only one cash payment of \$14.5 million. The company put up a corporate guarantee that later proved inadequate when its successor, Safety Kleen, filed for bankruptcy in 2000. By that time, Safety Kleen and Laidlaw Environmental had merged.



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S.C. Legislature not expected to find education fix this year

COLUMBIA (AP) — Legislators are unlikely to respond this year to the state Supreme Court's order to fix the education system that the justices say fails South Carolina's poor, rural children.

The GOP-controlled Legislature and Gov. Nikki Haley have asked for a rehearing on last November's decision, with legislators arguing both that the state's high court overstepped its authority in telling them to do anything and that the justices need to provide instruction on what to do. The justices ordered legislators and school officials to collectively fix the system but mandated no particular method for changing it and no timetable for doing so.

"They overstepped their bounds and didn't tell us something we don't already know," said Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler, R-Gaffney.

Haley's complaint is that the

court didn't give credit for the funding changes the Legislature passed in the budget last year at her recommendation. The ruling came two years after attorneys for the state and the rural districts that first sued in 1993 re-argued their appeal of a December 2005 lower court ruling that gave each side a partial victory.

"To say we have issues in rural areas, I totally agree with. ... They didn't account for what we already started to do," Haley said of the additional \$180 million put toward education in the first of what she calls her multi-year education initiative. "That needs to be acknowledged."

The Legislature approved similar increases to education the previous two years. Yet state spending on K-12 public schools is just this year back to the spending levels of 2007-08, before the Great Recession-era

cuts, according to data from the state Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office.

Last year's biggest change was adding a "weighting" for poverty in the funding formula, providing more to educate poor students. Haley's backing got Republicans on board with an idea advocated for years by Democrats and education advocates. The budget also put more toward reading coaches and technology in rural schools.

The court did acknowledge many piecemeal changes since 1993, including more money, new programs and various reform laws. But in discounting lawmakers' contention the case was moot, the justices noted state money is still distributed to districts based on laws passed in 1977 and 1984. The justices found the state's fractured education funding system denies opportunities to students in poor, rural districts.

