

Title: **Weathers says farmers may get relief**  
Author: BY KATHY ROPP KATHY.ROPP@MYHORRYNEWS.COM  
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Conway, SC Circulation: 6250



# Weathers says farmers may get relief

**BY KATHY ROPP**

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There may be some help coming to Horry County farmers who lost their crops in the October of 2015 flooding, but it may not be enough to save all of the state's growers, according to S.C. Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, who spoke Friday at the Conway Chamber of Commerce's Power Breakfast.

Weathers, who has been working to protect growers and consumers for almost 12 years, said South Car-

olina farmers saw a direct loss of about \$376 million washed away in the flooding.

The S.C. Legislature overwhelmingly passed a bill including \$40 million for the state's ailing farmers, but Weathers is anticipating that Governor Nikki Haley will veto the bill.

He says she compares it to a bank bailout, but he points out that the farmers didn't cause their problems

the way the bankers did.

Weathers and S.C. Rep. Kevin Hardee, R-105, both think the Legislature will override the Governor's veto.

Hardee said the Governor also passed up a chance to help the farmers by not requesting additional federal funding for them.

"I think she fails to understand that if you have your investment in a crop, it's not like you can just replant it and it'll come back up. You have to wait until next year,"

Hardee said.

Businesses, on the other hand, can usually relocate, although it might be at great expense, or resolve their problems and get back to work.

"But with farmers it's a whole year," he said.

Hardee thinks it's very important for the farmers to get all the help they can.

"I wish the Governor had asked for federal help," he said.

**WEATHERS, A2**

## Weathers: *Brings good news to farmers*

**FROM A1**

Weathers said crop insurance is so complicated that farmers will probably get about one-third of a \$200 million loss, or about \$66 million.

He estimates that the state's \$40 million will help with about 20 percent of the loss.

Hardee said he doesn't know of anyone on the Horry County Legislative Delegation that didn't vote for the state to help its farmers.

"It's not going to be a huge amount of help, but when you're faced with losing everything you got any help is a help," he said.

Hardee said reports he's getting from farmers say the ones who have been in business for many years and own their equipment will likely see their fields planted again. It's the younger farmers, who borrowed money for their

crops and still owe on their equipment, that he expects to see harmed more, perhaps even run out of business because they can't repay their loans and won't be able to secure new loans for next year's crops.

The pitch for agriculture

Weathers says it's critical to all of South Carolina that agriculture thrives. Not only does it make South Carolina a beautiful place to live, it also brings in lots of money and creates lots of jobs, he said.

In 2009, his department and Clemson University took a look at where agriculture was and set a goal for where it might be in the year 2020 in what they call the 50/20 plan.

They learned then that, including forestry, farming, manufacturing, distribution and marketing, that agriculture had a \$34 billion impact on the state's

economy and was responsible for 190,000 jobs.

The goal for 2020 was to have a \$50 billion impact, which Weathers classifies as a "pretty aggressive" goal.

At the halfway point, they took a look at their progress and learned that there had been good growth with the impact, then at \$42 billion, and the total jobs at 212,000.

Weathers explained some of that by saying the international market has been at an all-time high, making agriculture the country's only product that exports more than it imports. The United States, with 4 percent of the world's population, exports 30 percent of its agricultural products to the rest of the world, according to Weathers.

This requires his department to inspect every product that leaves through the Port of Charleston.

He said the state's choice of crops has changed over the years, noting that there is very little tobacco grown in the state now. Instead, profitable fields of sweet potatoes and peanuts are taking its place.

He pointed to Margaret Holmes – Farm Fresh Canned Vegetables setting up shop in Florence County and later purchasing Bruce's Yams for the increase in vegetables and especially sweet potatoes as crops of choice.

He believes the S.C. certified grown program has worked well and likes the idea of food hubs like the one in Marion County.

He said South Carolina products have a great reputation along the East Coast and they head regularly to New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

"It's great to watch South Carolina farmers compete with New York growers," he said.

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KATHY ROPP / THE HORRY INDEPENDENT

**Terry Hyman with Conway National Bank used Friday's Power Breakfast to discuss Horry's agricultural outlook with Hugh Weathers, state commissioner of agriculture.**



KATHY ROPP / THE HORRY INDEPENDENT

**Conway Chamber of Commerce President Gary Lee, left, Clemson University Extension's regional lead agent Blake Lanford, second from left, and Travis Dannelly, vice president of the chamber's Economic Development/Governmental Affairs division, right, posed with S.C. Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, second from right, after Friday's Power Breakfast.**

Title: **Haley 'not interested' in vice president slot**  
Author:  
Size: 6.51 column inches  
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### **Haley 'not interested' in vice president slot**

COLUMBIA - Gov. Nikki Haley says she's "not interested" in serving as a vice presidential nominee. Haley said in a statement provided to The Associated Press Wednesday that she's "flattered" to be mentioned as a possible running mate but that her "plate is full" governing South Carolina. Haley's star has risen due in part to her response to the Charleston church shooting and South Carolina's historic flooding. She gave this year's GOP response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union address. The statement came in response to questions about whether Haley would support Donald Trump as the GOP's nominee, now that other candidates have left the race. — AP

Title: **Lawmakers may ban citizens' pollution suits**  
 Author: SAMMY FRETWELL THE STATE  
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# Lawmakers may ban citizens' pollution suits

SAMMY FRETWELL

THE STATE

COLUMBIA - Politicians in South Carolina have revived a plan that curtails the public's right to sue for enforcement of state pollution laws — and the bill is within a House vote of passing the Legislature.

The House Judiciary Committee voted 13-10 this week for legislation blocking citizens from suing under state law to stop corporations, utilities and others from contaminating the environment. The bill, approved by the Senate more than a year ago, appeared to be dead in the House until it was put on the Judiciary Committee agenda for a vote this week.

Republican House Speaker Jay Lucas, who has supported efforts to limit state citizen suits, attended Tuesday's meeting and spoke with individual committee members before the vote. Committee Chairman Greg Delleney, a Chester Republican who voted for the bill, declined to answer questions about the legislation when questioned Wednesday.

Major corporations and some state utilities concerned about legal liability have backed a ban on citizen lawsuits, arguing that such court action isn't needed in South Carolina and only ham-

pers progress in the state.

The Legislature attempted to impose a ban on citizen lawsuits about four years ago, but the bill that passed proved ineffective at doing so.

Of concern to utilities are citizen lawsuits over coal ash, the toxic byproduct of making power. Coal waste ponds have polluted groundwater across South Carolina, from eastern Richland County to the Pee Dee and the Grand Strand. Utilities say they are cleaning up the mess by digging out ash waste ponds, but groundwater contamination remains in some spots.

Democratic Reps. James Smith and Beth Bernstein, both of Columbia, said the committee made a mistake in passing the bill.

Smith said the Legislature is stripping people's ability to stop illegal pollution discharges. In a citizens' suit, a court can require enforcement of the law. Such suits are considered at both the state and federal levels when government departments don't enforce pollution laws. They aren't common but are credited with helping require cleanups of contamination in South Carolina..

"You're either for letting your citizens stop illegal pollution or you are not," Smith said, calling the committee's action "pathetic."

The bill is expected to be debated in about two weeks. If the House approves the bill, it would

go to Gov. Nikki Haley for consideration. The Senate voted for the bill in 2015, but it had received little attention in the House. The version approved by the Senate contained an array of exemptions that allowed many suits to proceed. The House committee stripped many of those exemptions out.

"This is a bad bill," Bernstein said. "Hopefully, we can delay this from passing until the session ends" in early June.

The S.C. Manufacturers Alliance has supported similar versions. Among those backing the legislation is Santee Cooper, the state-owned utility that has had problems with coal ash contamination.

When asked, Duke Energy and SCE&G did not directly address whether they support a ban on citizen suits. But the companies signed a letter circulated at the judiciary committee meeting.



Title: Ice storm funds included in Senate budget  
 Author: BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND cckvland@ja.ikenstandard.com  
 Size: 44.17 column inches  
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



# Ice storm funds included in Senate budget

BY CHRISTINA CLEVELAND

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The S.C. Senate's 2016-17 fiscal year budget includes roughly \$12 million to 22 counties affected by the February 2014 ice storm.

The \$7.5 billion budget was approved by a vote of 36-5 Tuesday.

Ice storm allocations would go to Aiken County and several municipalities to finish reimbursing the counties for expenses not paid with federal emergency aid from the ice storm, known as Winter Storm Pax.

Lawmakers estimate Aiken County could get around \$4.7 million, the City of Aiken around \$300,000 and the City of North Augusta around \$115,000.

The February 2014 ice storm dropped roughly an inch of ice on Aiken County, taking down trees and cutting electricity and power to thousands of homes.

To pick up debris, Aiken County spent around \$33.2 million and the City of Aiken spent about \$2 million. The County received federal reim-

bursement of about \$22 million, leaving the County paying around \$6.1 million without the state's match.

The City received around \$1.8 million in federal reimbursement, leaving it paying a few thousand dollars without a state match.

In a 25 percent match, the state sent around \$4 million to 22 local governments for ice storm expenses in the last budget cycle, separate from the federal reimbursement.

Historically, local governments will handle around half of the cost to cover storm recovery and emergency services after a disaster declaration is announced, and states then handle additional costs to take

some of the financial pressure off the local governments and agencies.

Sen. Tom Young, R-Aiken, said when the current House budget came over, it included 100 percent reimbursement to local governments for the costs from the 2015 October flooding for any costs not covered by federal aid.

"Since the 2015 flood, non-covered expenses are being reimbursed at 100 percent, Sen. (Nikki) Setzler and I pushed for the remaining 75 percent from 2014 ice storm to be funded in this budget," Young said. "All of the Aiken County Delegation is working to get it in the budget and keep it there."

The Associated Press reported the ice storm match is the first priority among \$40 million in spending senators added Tuesday.

"The supplemental list will be funded this fall if tax collec-

tions for the fiscal year ending June 30 exceed current estimates," the AP report states.

The budget has gone back to the House.

Young pointed out the funds are important for Aiken County, as County Council members work to balance its 2016-17 budget without a property tax increase. The proposed budget uses one-time funds, which includes the funds for the ice storm, to balance the budget.

Gov. Nikki Haley supported sending "appropriate funds that would cover local governments' costs from the storms" in the fiscal year 2015-16 state budget, according to a statement sent by her office.

**Christina Cleveland** is the county government reporter at the *Aiken Standard*. The **Associated Press** and Digital News Editor **Maayan Schechter** contributed to this report.



AIKEN STANDARD FILE PHOTO

Powderhouse Road near College Acres was covered in debris after the ice storm moved through in February 2014.

Title: **DOE opposes intervention in lawsuit**  
 Author: BY THOMAS GARDINER [tgardiner@flienkenstandard.com](mailto:tgardiner@flienkenstandard.com)  
 Size: 29.14 column inches  
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



# DOE opposes intervention in lawsuit

BY THOMAS GARDINER  
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The U.S. Department of Energy met deadline in the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, or MOX, legal battle Monday with its oppositional response to the Southern Carolina Alliance motion to intervene.

The State of South Carolina filed the lawsuit against the DOE in February to enforce penalties for non-compliance with federal statute on the part of DOE.

The federal government was required to complete construction of the MOX facility by Jan. 1, 2016, or remove 1 metric ton of weapons-grade plutonium per year from the state.

According to the statute, penalties for noncompliance amount to \$1 million per day until the cap of \$100 million per year is reached. That limit was reached April 10, but if the DOE continues to be noncompliant, the penalties will begin to add up again after the new year. The Southern Carolina Alliance filed the motion to intervene at the end of March, asking for consideration as a benefactor of the penalties. The nonprofit group represents residents and economic develop-

ment in Barnwell and Allendale counties, which are host to the Savannah River Site, or SRS.

According to reports from the *Aiken Standard*, the Alliance said it operates an industrial park adjacent to SRS, located just a few miles from the K-reactor which it said stores some of the plutonium. The Alliance intervened on behalf of local residents, claiming the penalties would go to the South Carolina General Fund if the State wins the suit, not to the communities impacted by the economic loss of an unfinished MOX facility.

South Carolina filed a response in opposition to the intervention April 18, and Gov. Nikki Haley's office has stood by its opposition.

In a statement released at the time, her office said, "Federal law requires the Department of Energy to make economic and impact assistance payments to the State of South Carolina. The law is clear, these payments are due to the State alone, not other individuals or groups that may also wish to collect."

Haley's opposition is mirrored

by the DOE.

In the filings, the DOE said, "The statute which (the State of South Carolina) seeks to enforce does not reference Southern Carolina Alliance, any other landowner near SRS, or any other party at all. The statute therefore does not create any right, monetary or otherwise, to

which putative intervenor can claim an interest."

Both entities in the suit have asked the judge, J. Michael Childs, to deny the Alliance's intervention. It may be possible for the Alliance to file a lawsuit against the State for its claim to the economic assistance payments.

In its motion against the intervention, the DOE said the Alliance may pursue a lawsuit separate from the battle over MOX between the federal government and the State of South Carolina.

The DOE has filed a motion to dismiss the case but also has a looming deadline in coming weeks. The federal government is expected to respond to the State's motion requesting a summary judgement from the court.

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# Initiative aims to put ex-offenders to work

Each year, approximately 10,000 people are released from South Carolina prisons. An important part of the release process is preparing individuals to re-enter society and reduce the likelihood of them returning.

At Gov. Nikki Haley's request, the S.C. Department of Corrections (SCDC) and the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) partnered to create the Work Ready Initiative to help achieve this goal. The program began in November 2014 as a "One Stop Shop" for employment services within prison walls.

DEW provides one full-time employee, training and materials to assist qualified returning citizens in work-skills training. To be eligible to participate in the Work Ready program specific requirements must be met, including a disciplinary free record, non-violent offenses for incarceration, a GED or high school diploma.

Ninety days prior to release, offenders are taught employment and soft skills in class for one hour each day. During the last 30 days, offenders work directly with a DEW counselor to become registered in the SC Works system, craft a resume, and apply for jobs online after release, returning citizens are transitioned to the local SC Works Center for additional services.

Of the offenders that have qualified for the program, 98 individuals have successfully completed the Work Ready Initiative and are currently employed, while 466 offenders are currently enrolled, learning the skills necessary to find employment after they are released.

The results of this and other work-ready programs are a lower rate in which individuals return to prison. The current rate for the entire population is under 25%. The rate for people involved in the pre-release program is 22.6%; in the work program 18%; and the prison industry program is 15.3%.

## Lexington 2 'Excellent' in financial reporting

Lexington School District 2 has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. It's for the District's 2014-2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.



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Richardson

Kelly Richardson is Lexington 2's Chief Financial Officer.

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada recognized Lexington School District 2 for the award.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental reporting. Its attainment represents a significant accomplishment.

The award was announced at the District's Board meeting on Thursday evening, April 21.

— Terry Ward

## ERA Wilder Realty hires new agent

ERA Wilder Realty recently announced the addition of Jacqueline Davis to its team of real estate sales professionals serving consumers in the Chapin area.

Jacqueline Davis is originally a resident of New Mexico. She graduated from New Mexico State University with a Bachelor's



Davis

degree in Marketing. She moved to Chapin in 2013. She is a Chapin Lacrosse mom and the team's media manager. She also enjoys the lake life we have here in South Carolina. Davis is very detail-oriented which comes in handy when she works on her meticulous beading designs that she enjoys making.

"We are excited to have Jackie join our team in Chapin! Her marketing background and experiences will be a great benefit to her clients getting their homes sold and her buyer clients," said Dan Lang, Broker in Charge.

"I am so excited to get started! I love the Midlands and can't wait to help my clients find the house of their dreams," said Davis.

**Have you got local business news to share with our readers?**  
Email [MarkBellune@yahoo.com](mailto:MarkBellune@yahoo.com)

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# 148 Capitol Report



**Pat  
Henegan**

*SC Rep.,  
District 54*

It was with a heavy heart last week that I greeted the brave family of the late Allison English, one of two 16-year-olds who died in a fatal car crash two years ago. The family came to Columbia to testify in support of "Allison's Law" at a hearing before the House Criminal Laws Subcommittee on April 14. The bill, H 3074, which I sponsored, would make it a misdemeanor to use social media to post photos or videos depicting a minor (anyone younger than 18) at an accident or crime scene.

I introduced the bill in response to the haunting images of Allison English's body that a bystander posted on Facebook after a head-on collision in 2014. Allison and Jeremiah Adams, who attended Marlboro County High School, died after the pickup truck in which they were riding crossed the center line and collided with a logging truck.

At the subcommittee hearing, an attorney for the press spoke against the bill, arguing that the First Amendment protects an individual's right to post such images. However, Allison's family and I said the posting was a violation of the family's and

victim's rights to privacy, as well as a violation of moral standards of common decency. We were shocked that graphic photos were posted online even before the families or law enforcement had been notified about the accident.

Members of the subcommittee were glad we called attention to the problem. However, they said the bill will need to be sent to the Constitutional Laws Subcommittee because of the constitutional issues raised by the bill. Since the deadline for getting bills out of the House and to the Senate is May 1, we will likely have to wait until next session to get this done. Meanwhile, I will be working with legal staff to craft an even stronger bill.

I hope you are aware of the upcoming Marlboro County Health and Wellness Fair, which is aimed at improving residents' health and well-being. It will be held at the community center in Bennettsville from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. Friday, April 29.

The event, sponsored by the Marlboro County Coordinating Council, which I chair, will feature health screenings, speakers and information booths from more than 40 local and state health groups and agencies.

Information about Medicare and Medicaid will be provided, as well as exercise tips and healthy recipes. We will offer child safety

**See Henegan, 10**



# HENEGAN

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seat checks and free health screenings, including mammograms. You must preregister for mammograms at (843) 777-2095. A Chesterfield County Health and Wellness Fair, sponsored by S.C. Rep. Richie Yow and myself, will occur soon after this one.

Another upcoming event is the Marlboro County Youth Fishing Rodeo for those who are 15 years old or younger. They will need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Prizes will be awarded, and bait will be provided. Although some rods will be available, participants are encouraged to bring their own.

The rodeo will be held from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Saturday, May 7, at 3774 Hebron Dunbar Road in Clio. No pets and no adult fishing will be allowed. Pre-registration is encouraged by calling (803) 737-8483 or registering online at [www.dnr.sc.gov/aquaticed/rodeos](http://www.dnr.sc.gov/aquaticed/rodeos). This event has many sponsors, including the Marlboro County Legislative Delegation.

The House approved and sent to the Senate "Alicia's Law," H 4763, to crack down on Internet crimes against children. The bill would create an Internet Crimes Against Children Fund from a portion of fees collected from General Sessions Court. Sixty percent of the fund's revenues would be allocated to the State Attorney General's office to investigate and prosecute Internet crimes against children such as cyber-entice-ment and child pornography. Forty percent would go to the state Department of Public Safety for grants to local

law enforcement agencies to fight Internet crimes.

The bill is named after Alicia Kozakiewicz, the survivor of an abduction that occurred in 2002, when she was 13 years old. Alicia was taken outside her Pittsburgh home by an Internet predator whom she had met online eight months previously. She was rescued by the FBI four days later, after being tortured in a Virginia basement. Today, she leads a movement to encourage states to combat Internet crimes that endanger children.

The Department of Transportation reform bill (H 3579) is caught in a struggle over provisions relating to the DOT Commission, which carries out transportation policies. Currently, appointments to the commission are made by the General Assembly. The House and Senate have agreed to allow the governor, rather than the General Assembly, to appoint members of the DOT Commission.

However, the Senate version of the reform bill would make the governor's appointees subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, leaving the House out of the process. The House version would make the governor's appointees subject to the advice and consent of the House and Senate. A conference committee of House and Senate members will likely be appointed to settle differences in the two versions.

The House approved and sent the Senate the following bills:

H 4492, which I co-sponsored, would require the state Department of Social

Services to give foster parents 10 days' notice before holding hearings relating to child abuse and neglect, and would require the agency to advise foster parents of their right to submit a report or be heard by the courts at a hearing concerning the child.

H 3952 would make it easier for people with severe mental illness to get emergency care at a hospital or mental health clinic. Under current law, a person can qualify for emergency care if he or she poses a danger to self or others. The bill would add another reason for emergency admission: if the person is documented by a physician to be "gravely disabled," meaning that the mental illness prevents him or her from being able to take care of himself, or lacks the capacity to make responsible decisions regarding his or her treatment.

H 4773 would provide a quick way of alerting emergency medical personnel that a terminally-ill patient has a "Do Not Resuscitate Order" issued by a health care provider. It would authorize special "Do Not Resuscitate" wrist bracelets to alert emergency medical personnel that the patient has already obtained a written order. The bill would authorize the state health agency to select a vendor of the bracelets.

The House agreed to minor Senate amendments to the Cervical Cancer Prevention Act (H 3204), meaning the measure will be sent to Gov. Nikki Haley. The bill will allow the Department of Health and Environmental Control to offer the cervical





cancer vaccination series to rising seventh-graders and to develop informational brochures about the pros and cons of the vaccine series.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me. I can be reached in Columbia on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and

Thursdays at (803) 212-6896. My Columbia address is Rep. Pat Henegan, 333A Blatt, P.O. Box 11867, Columbia, SC 29211 or [pathenegan@schouse.gov](mailto:pathenegan@schouse.gov).

On Mondays and Fridays, you can reach me at (843) 479-7838. You may also call (843) 479-5622 to set up an

appointment to meet me Mondays or Fridays at my Bennettsville office, which is located at the Office of Veterans Affairs in the D.D. McColl House, 300 West Main St. The address of my local office is P.O. Box 41, Bennettsville, SC 29512.

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