

**From:** Sen. Tom Young <tom@tomyoungforsenate.com>  
**To:** Veldran, KatherineKatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov  
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**Subject:** Gray Tsunami, Penny Option, and More on MOX -- Update from Sen. Tom Young -- March 25 to March 31, 2014

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**Gray Tsunami, Penny Option, and More on MOX -- Update from Sen. Tom Young  
-- March 25 to March 31, 2014**

I hope that you find this update helpful and informative. If I can help you with an issue, please let me know. Thank you for reading and for allowing me to serve our District!

**State Senate News**

**Senior Citizens and the Coming "Gray Tsunami":** Last Wednesday, Lt. Governor Glenn McConnell addressed a joint session of the General Assembly to raise awareness for issues facing senior citizens in South Carolina. He said that our state's senior citizen population will explode from 900,000 now to over 2 Million by 2030. He called on lawmakers to put more money into home-delivered meals, transportation, and other programs to keep seniors living at home rather than living in much more expensive nursing homes and other forms of assisted living. Those programs cost the state about \$1,400 per senior on average compared with about \$52,000 for a nursing home bed paid for through Medicaid. His presentation made financial sense and I will do what I can to pay attention to the implementation of his recommendations. To see the story, go here: <http://www.southcarolinaradionetwork.com/2014/03/26/lt-gov-warns-of-gray-tsunami-as-state-population-ages/>

**Penny Sales Tax Referendum Option Heads to House of Representatives** : Last Thursday, the Senate approved legislation that would give the Aiken County School District an additional option for voters to consider (instead of higher property taxes) in paying for school buildings and renovations. The bill will now be taken up in the House of Representatives. As approved in the Senate, the legislation states the following as to the Aiken County School District:

- requires that the voting public within the Aiken County School District vote on

- any proposed referendum for the penny sales tax at the time of a general election (not at a special election on a low turnout day);
- requires that at least 10% of the revenue collected from a penny sales tax be applied annually to reduce the debt millage for property tax that goes to Aiken County School District for capital and maintenance needs (not operations) so will reduce the "school bond debt" portion of property tax on both 4% (owner occupied) and 6% (commercial) properties;
- requires the School District to present what will be done with all collected money in a written proposal before the voter referendum;
- the money has to be used for school capital needs (new buildings, renovations of existing buildings) -- cannot be used for operations;
- applies to the Aiken County School District which is all of Aiken County and a portion of Saluda County in the Aiken County School District;
- forbids the School District from bonding more than 90% of the money remaining after any portion that goes to property tax relief. This is a safety net measure to ensure a revenue stream will exist from the penny to pay for any bond issued by the School District;
- ensures that the local penny cannot be collected on the sale of most groceries (like current law);
- limits the number of local pennies that can be implemented for any purpose at one time within Aiken County to two pennies meaning that with the capital projects sales tax penny currently being collected in Aiken County, if this penny is also approved by voters, then there could not be any more local pennies collected in Aiken County under any other applicable law.

**Penny Sales Tax Option Referendum -- Perspective:** Unlike Aiken County, twenty-one other counties in the state currently have the option to consider a penny sales tax for school capital needs versus a traditional property tax increase. This legislation allows Aiken County to have that option. Property owners in some school districts in counties that do not have the penny option like Anderson and Spartanburg are paying from 41% to 144% more in taxes on school bond debt than property owners in Aiken County are. Like most people within our district, I do not want to see higher property taxes. Ultimately, voters will decide whether to approve any penny sales tax proposal presented by the School District. If voters approve this option, this legislation ensures that property owners will get some tax relief while all taxpayers in the county and visitors to the county will pay for any necessary school capital improvements specified in a proposed referendum rather than just property owners within the county.

**DSS Oversight Subcommittee :** Last week, I chaired a fourth meeting for a Senate subcommittee charged with hearing testimony about child protective services and foster care services at the Department of Social Services. This subcommittee's work has quickly become significant statewide for the issues related to DSS and children. Director Lillian Koller is scheduled to testify before the subcommittee on April 16 at 9 a.m. As covered in statewide news media in recent weeks, her testimony is much anticipated. If you have an experience in this area that you would like to share with me, please let me know. I am committed to pressing forward so that our subcommittee can make the best possible recommendations to the General

Assembly to protect children better in our state.

**Senate Approves Epilepsy Drug for Children** : Last week, the Senate unanimously approved legislation that could benefit children with severe epilepsy by giving them access by prescription to a marijuana extract called cannabidiol oil. The extract does not include the chemical THC which is associated with the "high" effects of illegal marijuana use. Several Aiken County parents and grandparents contacted me about their children or grandchildren with epilepsy and how this medication offers treatment that is not available from other medications. The State Law Enforcement Division was involved in the drafting the approved legislation which now goes to the House of Representatives.

**State Unemployment Rate** : Our state's unemployment rate for February was 5.7 percent marking the first time in about 16 years that South Carolina's rate was nearly 1 point below the national average.

**Wild Turkey Hunting Season Changes** : Aiken County is home to many turkey hunters. Last week, the Senate approved and sent to the House of Representatives a bill that implements a statewide uniform turkey season for hunting male turkey, to be March 20th through May 5th. The bill sets a statewide youth turkey day to be the Saturday before March 20th; sets a uniform bag limit (archery and lawful firearms) for male turkeys at 3, with an additional bird allowed upon the purchase of an "archery only turkey tag"; requires DNR to conduct a turkey study within 180 days of the conclusion of the third turkey season after the bill becomes effective; and increases the fine for violating the provisions of the law. Currently, the turkey season for all game zones in the state is April 1 through May 1 except for Game Zone 6 which starts March 15.

### **SRS – MOX Project Update**

**Congressional Delegation Letter** to DOE Secretary Moniz: Yesterday, all of the SC Congressional delegation joined by other members of Congress sent a letter to Secretary Moniz requesting that DOE reconsider the decision to place MOX in cold standby by status. to see that letter, go here: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/3xbddnm3m250dbc/mox\\_cold\\_standby\\_letter.pdf](https://www.dropbox.com/s/3xbddnm3m250dbc/mox_cold_standby_letter.pdf)

**DHEC Director's Letter to DOE:** On March 21, Catherine Templeton at DHEC sent a letter to DOE requesting that DOE clarify the status of the plutonium intended for the MOX facility. Existing environmental laws establish requirements for disposing of certain types of waste that may apply to plutonium stored at SRS intended for the MOX facility. As of last night, DOE had not yet responded to the letter. To see the DHEC letter, go here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/n1arqtck9h7jgkq/2014%203-21%20MOX.pdf>

**SRS CRO Letter to DOE Secretary Moniz** : Also, on March 21, SRS CRO sent a letter to DOE Secretary Moniz requesting information from DOE on several fronts including the reasons for DOE's failure to sign a proposed commercial agreement/master fuel contract. To see that letter, go here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ocpqj1gh4bejl7c/MOX%20Letter%20-%20Dr.%20Moniz%203-21-14.pdf>

**What is Next?** : Our legislative delegation will continue to keep our district updated on this issue as things develop related to the MOX project and a clear path forward for the disposition of weapons grade plutonium stored at SRS and elsewhere in the United States.

### Other News of Local Interest

**Aiken First Baptist Church Members in Columbia** : Last Thursday, several folks from Aiken First Baptist Church were in Columbia. Rep. Don Wells and I were able to visit with them. We enjoyed their visit!

**BMW Expansion:** On Friday, BMW announced a \$1 billion expansion at the Greer, SC plant. The expansion will create 800 new jobs as BMW plans to build the new X7 SUV at the Spartanburg County plant. This announcement follows a \$900 million expansion in January 2012. The expansion will make the plant BMW's largest in the world.

### News Related to Ice Storm

**Federal Emergency Management Assistance:** Some county residents and home owner's groups have asked whether they can qualify for assistance with storm debris clean up. At present, there has only been a Presidential Public Assistance Declaration issued which allows for remediation of debris and hangers/leaner limbs from approved right-of ways and governmental agencies property. Thus county residents and home owner's groups may not qualify. Nevertheless, emergency management officials are the contact for these questions. The Aiken County emergency management contacts are David Ruth at [druth@aikencountysc.gov](mailto:druth@aikencountysc.gov) or Tommy Thompson at [tthompson@aikencountysc.gov](mailto:tthompson@aikencountysc.gov). They can be emailed to provide answers to questions in this area. Please let me know if you have questions that are not answered promptly.

**Timber Damage – Information** : The SC Forestry Commission released information last week to provide guidance to landowners who have questions about what to do with their ice-damaged trees. To learn more, go here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3k7lr70a32wbc9y/SCFC%20Ice%20Damage%20Response.pdf>

**Debris Removal – City of Aiken** : The City of Aiken is posting information on Facebook, Twitter, and the City of Aiken web site and as to debris removal. The City also has provided this link: <https://www.cityofaikensc.gov/index.php/storm-debris-pickup-schedule-map/>.

**Debris Removal – City of North Augusta** : If you have questions about debris removal in the City of North Augusta, email city manager Todd Glover at [tglover@northaugusta.net](mailto:tglover@northaugusta.net).

**Debris Removal -- Aiken County** : Aiken County continues to pick up debris. The County has 1100 square miles to cover with debris pickup. If you have questions about the schedule, call the County Administrator's office at 642-2012.

### Constituent Information

**Legislative Email Updates** : Locally, three members of the House of Representatives, who represent portions of Aiken County within Senate District 24, send regular email updates. Their respective contact information to get on their email lists to receive their email updates are as follows:

- Rep. Bill Hixon (Dist. 83): [bill@billhixon.com](mailto:bill@billhixon.com)
- Rep. Bill Taylor (Dist. 86): [bill@taylorscheuse.com](mailto:bill@taylorscheuse.com)
- Rep. Don Wells (Dist. 81): [dwells29801@gmail.com](mailto:dwells29801@gmail.com)

**Congressman Joe Wilson Contact Information** : Congressman Wilson now represents all of Aiken County. He has staff in Aiken County with office hours in Aiken and in North Augusta. His office number is [608-9747](tel:608-9747).

**Speaking with Groups Around the District** : If you are involved with a local group that would like for me to attend a meeting to provide a legislative update, please let me know.

**Report Waste, Fraud and Abuse in State Government** : To report waste, fraud and abuse in state government, you can call: [1-855-SC-FRAUD](tel:1-855-SC-FRAUD).

**Facebook** : I have a Facebook page for Senator Tom Young. Please “like” the page to receive updates during the week from me on Facebook.

**Tom Young’s Website** : My website can be reached at <http://www.senatortomyoung.com>. There are links to a variety of constituent services; the status of sponsored bills; and roll call votes. Please add my web site as a bookmark on your computer.

**Small Business Help – SC Dept. of Commerce** : The South Carolina Department of Commerce has helpful information for small business owners and employees. To learn more, go to <http://sccommerce.com/south-carolina-business-network>.

**Save for College - Future Scholar 529 College Savings Plan** : South Carolina’s 529 College Savings Plan Future Scholar offers special tax benefits for South Carolina residents. To learn more or to enroll, go to <http://www.FutureScholar.com/parents>.

**Child Passenger Safety** : To learn more about ways to keep your children or grandchildren safe in your car, go to <http://www.bucklebuddiessc.org/>. The information at this link is provided in part by the South Carolina Department of Public Safety.

**Request a Flag** : If you would like to request a state or U.S. flag flown over the State Capitol in Columbia, please let me know at [tom@senatortomyoung.com](mailto:tom@senatortomyoung.com). Flags vary in cost according to their size and their material from which they are made.

**State House Tours** : Tours are available for the S.C. State House by calling [\(803\) 734-2430](tel:803-734-2430). If you set a tour between January and June and it is on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, please let me know so I can do my best to see you.

**Thoroughbred Country-- South Carolina Regional Tourism Organization** : To learn more about tourism in the four county region of Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, and

Barnwell, visit <http://www.tbredcountry.org>.

**Email Updates** : If you know of people in or around District 24 who do not receive my updates but they would like to get them, please email their names and email addresses to me.

**Road Issues** : If you see a road problem such as a pothole needing repair, call the SCDOT at [641-7665](tel:641-7665) or Aiken County at [642-1532](tel:642-1532) to report the problem. If you do not get a prompt response, please let me know at [tom@senatortomyoung.com](mailto:tom@senatortomyoung.com) or call me. Generally, most paved roads in the County are maintained by SCDOT and are identified on the road sign poles by a small black and white sign listing the road number, such as S-2-1669. Most unpaved roads in the County are maintained by the County.

Thank you for the opportunity and the honor to represent you. Please let me know if I can help you in any way or if you have questions about these or other issues. Your feedback is meaningful and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tom Young  
649-0000 (o)  
215-3631 (cell)

Paid for by Tom Young for Senate

This message was sent to [katherineveldran@gov.sc.gov](mailto:katherineveldran@gov.sc.gov) from:

Tom Young for Senate | PO BOX 651 | Aiken, SC 29802

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