



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

May 18, 2016

Mr. Edward Swartz
422 Cedar Creek Road
Wagener, South Carolina 29164-8925

Dear Mr. Swartz,

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding surface water withdrawal permits and your recommendation to study and amend the South Carolina Surface Water Withdrawal Act. I appreciate your engagement on this issue. Like you, I understand that South Carolina's rivers and streams are the arteries that feed our environment and communities, support our state's rural aesthetics, and drive economic activity.

In response to recent large-scale agricultural water use, several citizens have requested that I issue some directive or order that would cease all new withdrawal activity in this state. Though my office works closely with the agencies that regulate the use of our waterways, South Carolina law significantly limits the authority of the Governor on this matter. Ultimately, changes to our surface water policies must be managed either through agencies not under my direct authority or through a change in permanent law by South Carolina's legislature. Further, my office has been assured that the most controversial activities reported on in the past year were legally taken, using agricultural exemptions intentionally placed into law in 2010.

Although the options available to my office for direct action are somewhat limited, I agree that this issue has become ripe for discussion and study once again. Several members of the General Assembly have introduced legislation aimed at addressing public concerns about South Carolina's surface water withdrawal policies, and I will work with them as these proposals move through the legislative process. Rest assured, this administration remains dedicated to helping communities and regulators strike the balance between conservation and long-term economic development. God bless.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nikki".
Nikki R. Haley

NRH/ahp

A handwritten note in dark ink that says "Thank you." with a flourish at the end.