

Title: **Haley part of federal fight**
 Author: Associated Press
 Size: 35.80 column inches
 Greenwood, SC Circulation: 16494



Haley part of federal fight

GOP governors ask FCC to address illegal prison cellphones

Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Ten Republican governors want the Federal Communications Commission to give states more autonomy to apply technology that can stop prison inmates from using smuggled cellphones.

Gov. Nikki Haley and her counterparts encouraged FCC Chairman Thomas Wheeler in a letter Monday to give them “flexibility and authority” to render such communication impossible.

While the letter doesn’t explicitly say so, what the governors want is permission to jam cellphone signals behind bars.

A 1934 law says the FCC can grant permission to jam public airwaves only to federal agencies, not state or local ones. The cellphone industry has



**NIKKI
HALEY**

strongly opposed the use of localized jamming technology out of concern that it could set a precedent leading to much wider gaps in their networks.

The governors said the technology would be strictly limited to prisons, and society outside would not suffer.

“The FCC should act to streamline regulatory review processes and allow states to implement cost-efficient technology in prisons, where the installation of such technology will not sacrifice the safety of the general public,” reads the letter, which was proposed by Haley and also signed by governors from Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah.

Haley has long spoken of the dangers of illegal cellphones behind bars. Smuggled by the thousands inside

hollowed out footballs, whisked in by corrupt employees or sometimes even dropped by drone, these phones can give inmates an unmonitored, unfettered means of continuing their crimes and even perpetrating violence.

“This is something that has a solution to it,” Haley testified last month at an FCC field hearing in Columbia. She said the state has tried other methods, none as effective as signal blocking. “Allow us to jam our prisons. ... Something has to change.”

Robert Johnson, a former anti-contraband officer at one of South Carolina’s most violent prisons, was shot six times outside his Sumter home in 2010, after police said an inmate used an illegal cellphone to order the hit. He survived, enduring more than a dozen surgeries, and has become an advocate for using jamming technology in prisons.

South Carolina Corrections Director Bryan Stirling and his predecessor, Jon Ozmint, also have sought this permission, to no avail.

Title: **House OKs \$2 billion road borrowing bill liked by Senate, Haley**
 Author: BY JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press
 Size: 18.75 column inches
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



House OKs \$2 billion road borrowing bill liked by Senate, Haley

BY JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

COLUMBIA

A bill that would borrow \$2 billion to fix major highways and bridges in South Carolina may have only a short distance left to go.

The House voted 102-3 Tuesday to give key approval to a combined bill with both the extra money for roads and a change in the commission that runs the state Department of Transportation.

The Senate passed similar proposals separately, and Gov. Nikki Haley has indicated she supports them.

The vote with just six days left in the General Assembly's session puts lawmakers as close as they have been during their two years in Columbia to putting a significant dent in the nearly \$1 billion a year for 30 years the Department of Transportation said it needs to get South Carolina roads to good condition.

Currently, the DOT says 54 percent of the state's primary roads are in poor condition, compared with

31 percent eight years ago.

The bill uses the remaining part of the state sales tax on vehicle purchases currently sent to the general budget fund and the fee paid for a driver's license to come up with \$200 million, which would be used to get bonds of up to \$2.2 billion over 10 years.

That money will free up funds the DOT would have spent on the bridge repairs and interstate widenings that can be used to pave rural roads and fix other problems, DOT Secretary Christy Hall has said.

The three House members who voted against the bill said the state shouldn't borrow money for these types of projects.

The members who voted against the bill also said lawmakers should take more time to make sure reforms at DOT are working.

"We need to reform DOT before we throw buckets of money at them," said Rep. Ralph Norman, R-Rock Hill.

Title: **Abortion rights supporters call on Haley to veto bill**
 Author:
 Size: 8.83 column inches
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



Abortion rights supporters call on Haley to veto bill

COLUMBIA

Abortion rights supporters are calling on Republican Gov. Nikki Haley to veto a bill banning most abortions in South Carolina past 19 weeks.

About 50 people chanted "Stop the Ban!" during a rally Tuesday outside the Statehouse. Signs carried by protesters included those reading "Keep the elephant out of the womb" and "Don't tread on me" next to a drawing of a uterus.

The Legislature gave final approval to the measure last week. It allows exceptions only if the mother's life is in jeopardy or a doctor determines the fetus can't survive outside the womb.

Haley has said she'll almost certainly sign the bill. It will reach her desk after the leaders of both chambers ceremoniously sign it.

Seven Democratic legislators who fought the bill addressed the rally.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

Title: **Supporting farmers**

Author:

Size: 1.08 column inches

Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Supporting farmers

It's a shame what Gov. Nikki Haley has done to our farmers. It's time to support our farmers.

Title: **Gov. Nikki Haley salutes POST ChalleNGe grads**
 Author: BY THOMAS GARDINER tgardiner@aikenstandard.com
 Size: 141.20 column inches
 Aiken, SC Circulation: 19635



Gov. Nikki Haley salutes POST ChalleNGe grads

ATC recognizes inaugural class of youth cadets

BY THOMAS GARDINER

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Gov. Nikki Haley was in Graniteville on Friday to speak to cadets at the inaugural graduation of the Post ChalleNGe program at Aiken Technical College.

The letters N and G are emphasized in the program's title recognizing its connection to the South Carolina Na-

ATC

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of Defense and the Aiken County Commission for Higher Education, made an investment in their lives.

"We invested in you because we see something in you. You are capable of great things," Haley said.

The audience celebrated with tears and a standing ovation as the cadets earned certificates in several technical areas including computer networking,

tional Guard.

Cadets were admitted to ATC after completion of the Youth ChalleNGe Academy, an education program for at-risk youth. Through the program, cadets can earn a GED and learn discipline in a military-type environment

that prohibits alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use.

Haley told cadets that the many organizations involved, including the U.S. Department of Labor, Department

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patient care assisting, welding and wireless tower technology.

Cadet Joshua Harrelson, wireless tower technology graduate, said, "This means a lot. Graduation builds a success story."

Future plans varied from working in family businesses, to military careers and one even planned to pursue a professional boxing career. Haley told

them they are leaders for the future of the program.

"You've set the bar, and that bar is pretty high," she said.

The Youth ChalleNGe Academy admits a new class each January and July.

Thomas Gardiner is the SRS beat reporter for the *Aiken Standard*. Gardiner is a Marine Corps veteran and studied at USC Aiken.

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STAFF PHOTO BY THOMAS GARDINER

Cadets from the first Post ChalleNGe graduation look on as Gov. Nikki Haley congratulates them before receiving their certificates Friday at Aiken Technical College.

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STAFF PHOTO BY THOMAS GARDINER

Gov. Nikki Haley, left, joins Aiken Technical College President Dr. Susan Winsor, right, at the inaugural POST ChalleNGe graduation.

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STAFF PHOTO BY THOMAS GARDINER

Members of the inaugural POST ChalleNGe class applaud their fellow classmates during the ceremony at Aiken Technical College.

Title: **Audit: Merge S.C. DOT, highway borrowing agency**
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press
 Size: 34.1 column inches
 Rock Hill, SC Circulation: 34688



TRANSPORTATION

Audit: Merge S.C. DOT, highway borrowing agency

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press
COLUMBIA

The South Carolina agency that borrows and doles out money for large highway projects should merge with the Department of Transportation, state auditors recommended Thursday.

Combining the agencies would allow for better coordination and prioritization of highway projects and focus accountability in a single agency, the report by the Legislative Audit Council says.

But the chairman of the state Transportation Infrastructure Bank said the two must remain separate, due to the DOT's limited ability to borrow money under state law and the state constitution.

"The situation demands it," said Chairman Vincent Graham.

The Legislature created the bank in 1997 to fund projects that can't be built on a pay-as-you-go basis, such as the Ravenel Bridge that links Charleston to Mount Pleasant. Since then, it has awarded about \$3.8 billion in grants and \$1 billion in loans for transportation projects. As of June 2015, the bank still owed about \$2 billion to bondholders, according to the report.

It notes that legislators would need to alter state law or the constitution to consolidate the

agencies. But that wouldn't be easy.

"Merging the two would have consequences on debt. It's hard to get the toothpaste back in the tube," said Mike Wooten. As chairman of the DOT commission, Wooten also has a seat on the borrowing agency's board.

The report comes as legislators attempt to finalize a bill changing governance in the two agencies and allowing for \$2 billion in borrowing over 10 years, funded by \$200 million annually in existing fees and vehicle taxes.

Legislators say that will jumpstart meeting the state's needs without raising taxes. The DOT has said it needs an additional \$1.5 billion yearly over three decades to bring one of the nation's largest highway systems to good condition.

Opponents of raising the state's gas tax — unchanged since 1987 at 16 cents per gallon — have blocked any increase, saying the DOT and infrastructure bank must be reformed first. The audit was requested last year by 24 legislators.

Critics, including Gov. Nikki Haley, contend politics, not priorities, determine which highway projects the infrastructure bank funds. Two of the board's

seven members are legislators and two others are appointed by legislators.

"Today's audit is another reminder we must permanently reform the DOT and end the political horse trading of our roads by prioritizing funding based on traffic needs, safety and economic development in all areas of our state," said Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams.

The bill still in negotiations — with three days left in the regular legislative session — would give the DOT commission oversight of the banking board's decisions. It would also require the infrastructure bank to fund projects based on the DOT's priority rankings.

Assuming the bill becomes law, the audit's recommendations are essentially "going into effect anyway," said Rep. Chip Limehouse, R-Charleston, an infrastructure board member.

The auditors' report found that the borrowing agency's application and decision processes lack written policies and consistency. And while the agency requires local governments to share in the expenses, there are no set rules for what percentage of a project's total cost must be funded locally and what qualifies as a match, the audit said.