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Referred Environment

Answered NRN

I would like to introduce you to Rep James Smith who's bill starts us in the right direction. I'd also like to recognize the co-sponsors of this bill. It takes some grit to address this issue and I applaud the sponsors and would encourage other legislators to join them.

Thank you for your time.

We have two very PRECIOUS RESOURCES here in SC, our WATER and SC FARMERS. Both have sustained us for centuries and the loss of either one is UNACCEPTABLE.

One more thing lawmakers, policymakers, lobbyists look around you there is a lot of farmers, business people, and concerned citizens here today. Five years ago DNR started speaking out about the flaws in the current surface water law if their warning had been heeded we would not be standing here today. I beg of you to listen to the scientists you've hired from DNR and USGS who understand our water best.

There is one good thing that has come out of this struggle, it has made us realize how precious water really is and how the LORD has blessed us with it.

The Edisto and the Salkehatchie Regions are the canaries in the coal mine. We are seeing unrestrained development of giant out of state farms using both surface and groundwater. We have seen fish kills and historic lows despite not being in a declared drought situation. And even now, with recent rains, the South Edisto River at Denmark flows at half of normal.

Look around, many of the people you see here today represent generations of real farmers. They have had to adapt in order to survive and I would put their abilities against any in the nation. I beg you as leaders of agriculture to give the guidance, financing, and encouragement to our farmers for a chance to prosper FIRST, before looking outside of our borders. And farmers we have to be willing to change and embrace new ideas as well.

Today we have some very loose surface water regulations in SC that promises more water than we actually have, and would allow any agricultural entity to draw any river or stream in the state to a zero flow, regardless of downstream users. This same law is drawing large farms into SC that will compete directly with our farmers for land, fertilizer, market share, and WATER. I understand that these giant farms will immediately enhance the bottom line of our state, but I am deeply concerned that it will ultimately undermine our SC Farmers who are the backbone and pillars of every community in this state.

Rep. James Smith's bill is the first step in the right direction. But we must look down the road to improve the management of all our water resources for the sake of SC's future!

GOV. HALEY,

HERE IS A COPY OF MY SPEECH.

WE WANT SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT !!

Good Morning. I appreciate everyone coming out to address this very important issue today. If you would, please hold any questions until after the last speaker. I am going to be very brief and to the point.

My name is Doug Busbee. I stand before you today representing a wide range of people from across South Carolina, from farmers, to business people, to everyday working class citizens. We have come together as a coalition called SCRiversForever.org. We believe WATER is a PUBLIC TRUST RESOURCE. Our goal is to encourage and support SUSTAINABLE economic development while RESPECTING the tremendous value of our NATURAL RESOURCES, SC FARMERS and all CITIZENS.

Thank you

Doug Busbee

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