

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

P. O. Box 748
Sullivan's Island, SC 29482
November 8, 2015

Dear Governor Haley,

I am writing to you for two reasons:

First, to thank you for your courageous leadership with respect to having the Confederate Battle Flag removed from the Statehouse grounds in Columbia in July. I was moved by reading Jennifer Berry Hawes' in-depth interview with you in the Post and Courier (July 19, 2015), which made clear the profound effect the massacre at Mother Emmanuel AME Church had had on you; how it was connected to your own experience of growing up with prejudice; and how it has moved you to inspired leadership in the troubled arena of race relations.

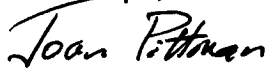
I am especially pleased that you felt it important to take responsibility for what happens on your watch as governor; how, with great respect, you met with all parties and brought people together across a racial divide, saying the Statehouse grounds belong to everybody. And you got the job done!

Second, to say there is another arena that is calling for your leadership in our state: the proposal to do seismic testing and drilling for oil off the SC coast. If, as you said in July, the Statehouse grounds in Columbia do not belong to any single group, but are shared in common, isn't it even more important to recognize that our unique and fragile SC coastal ecosystem belongs to all of us and is to be shared and managed for the common good?

Right now, as Governor of SC, you have another opportunity to act for the common good. As Governor, you have the authority and power to protect SC from the ill effects of offshore testing and drilling by asking the Obama administration to take SC out of the Proposed Five Year Program. Nothing I have read suggests that the possible (not guaranteed) short-term benefits of extracting minimal supplies of oil and gas from offshore SC waters would come remotely close to offsetting the amount of damage inflicted on the marine and onshore environment by the proposed seismic testing and drilling.

As someone who cares deeply about what happens on your watch as governor, please act now to prevent this travesty. Please say NO to testing and drilling in our waters!

Yours in hope,


Joan Pittman

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