

COUNTY OF PICKENS

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COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
Ralph Guarino, Interim
CLERK TO COUNCIL
Donna F. Owen

September 22, 2015

✓ The Honorable Nikki Haley
Governor, State of South Carolina
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

The Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.
President *Pro Tempore*, S.C. Senate
111 Gressette Bldg.
Columbia 29201

The Honorable Alan Wilson
South Carolina Attorney General
P.O. Box 11549

Columbia, S.C. 29211

Chief Mark Keel
South Carolina Law Enforcement Division
4400 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29210

State Ethics Commission
5000 Thurmond Mall Suite 250
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: SLED Investigation #34-15-0058 – Pickens County Council

Dear Governor Haley, et al.,

At its regular stated meeting on September 21, 2015, the Pickens County Council voted unanimously to write to you and express the Council's deep concern over the use of the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) for apparent political purposes. Recently, the Pickens County Sheriff, Rick Clark, requested an investigation into the County Council and its employees due to a purported "anonymous" letter he received alleging criminal conduct by County officials and/or employees. After many weeks of investigation, SLED ultimately deemed these allegations by Sheriff Clark to be "unfounded" and the investigation was closed.

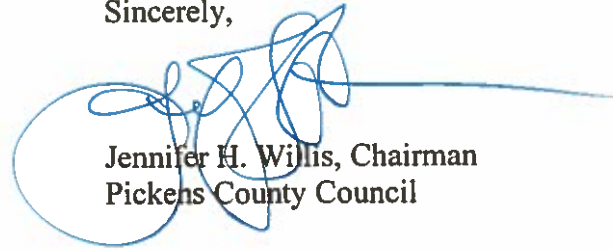
As a backdrop to this situation, please understand that the Sheriff and County Council are currently at odds over several political issues, including budget requests and situations at our local jail. The Council believes that this investigation was initiated by the Sheriff in order to apply political pressure on the county government so that we would acquiesce to his demands. Council's concern is exacerbated by their understanding that the Sheriff asked SLED to expand

its investigation to include Mr. Tim Morgan, a private citizen who was the Sheriff's political opponent from the immediately prior election cycle, as a potential subject of this investigation.

Pickens County Council believes that SLED should not be used in this way. Valuable time and taxpayers' money were expended in what appears to us to be a blatant political maneuver. In contrast, Council understands that SLED should be a neutral and nonpolitical investigative agency, and we trust that you agree with us on these points. Accordingly, Council wanted to inform you of these concerns, so you could take action as you deem appropriate.

Please contact me if you need any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Willis", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jennifer H. Willis, Chairman
Pickens County Council

