



2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

1. Maintain Agribusiness Sales Tax Exemptions/Property Tax Assessments

A SC House Tax Policy Review Committee was appointed last fall to review all tax exemptions and met through the early part of the session to prepare their findings. With lawmakers examining current exemptions which include those for agribusiness, this continues to be an issue to watch to make sure we maintain these important sales tax exemptions and property tax assessments for the industry.

2. Surface Water & Groundwater Withdrawal

Surface and groundwater withdrawal regulations will be a big issue next session with the recent focus on the water situation in Aiken County. PABC believes no changes should be made to amend the Surface Water Permitting Act of 2010 until the completion of the Statewide Assessment of Water Resources and be based on sound science.

3. Poultry Permitting

Last session, the House passed H.3929, which addresses the appeals process for DHEC permits for animal ag facilities as it relates to setbacks and property owners of adjacent properties. The Senate will take up the bill in the next session. This legislation is needed to allow the SC poultry industry to remain competitive.

4. Stay Bill

S.105 passed the Senate and is now in the House Judiciary Committee. This bill would limit the automatic stay in contested cases in the Administrative Law Court (ALC). Under current law, a plaintiff objecting to a permit can object to a project and receive an automatic stay for an indefinite period of time without offering any evidence that a permit should not be issued. This legislation provides for the automatic stay to still be available, but the person objecting would have to show legitimate grounds for objecting to a project.

5. CDL Liability Insurance and Driver Shortage

PABC and members of the Associated Industries of SC are working with the Governor and two cabinet agencies on CDL issues. The Department of Insurance is developing a report to identify what is increasing costs for liability insurance for truck drivers, especially log truck drivers. Insurance premiums have tripled for many logging truck owners. The Associated Industries of SC is examining funding opportunities with the Department of Employment and Workforce to promote careers as CDL drivers, heavy equipment operators and in the construction trade. It will also be PABC's intention to monitor the Vehicle Owner Tort Equity Act (VOTE) legislation being proposed by the SC Civil Justice Coalition.

6. Dams and Reservoirs Standards

The House passed H.3218, the Dams & Reservoirs Act, which increases the number of dams that could be regulated by DHEC, pursuant to the Dams and Reservoirs Safety Act. The legislation is now in the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. The Forestry Association and Farm Bureau are working on a proposed amendment to provide Dam owners a tax credit for any repairs they are required to make under the provisions of the legislation.

7. Agency Funding

Support funding for the budget requests of the SC Department of Agriculture, SC Forestry Commission and Clemson PSA.

8. Skilled Workforce Development Initiative

PABC is in support of this initiative by the SC Trucking Association to promote careers in skilled trades for state funding of \$950,000 to be allocated to the State's Technical College System to be used to build and deploy a mobile skilled professional jobs promotion workshop.

9. Private Property Rights – Eminent Domain

Act 205 of 2016 prohibits a "private, for-profit pipeline" company from using eminent domain authority for a period of up to three years while a Petroleum Pipeline Study Committee reviews the issue. The Committee has until December 31, 2017, to report their recommendations to the General Assembly.

10. Business License Fees

Support a better integrated system of determining business license fees and a cap on the amount local governments can charge.

11. SC Conservation Bank

S.219 would reauthorize the S.C. Conservation Bank, a state agency that improves the quality of life in our State by providing competitive grants and leveraging funds to protect family farms and working forests.

FEDERAL OR STATE/FEDERAL

1. Farm Bill

The Farm Bill is broad legislation directly impacting agriculture, forestry and SC rural communities. Consideration is given to this key agribusiness legislation on a 5-year cycle. Accordingly, 2018 should include debate on the new Farm Bill.

2. Labor Issues

Immigration (State/Federal)

For agribusiness to remain profitable and in business, we must have federal immigration reform that allows access to a stable and legal workforce.

Agribusiness Labor (State/Federal)

PABC opposes unionization of agribusiness labor and along with other organizations, will continue to study legislation enacted in North Carolina in 2017.

3. Water of the U.S. (WOTUS)

President Trump signed an Executive Order directing the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to begin the rulemaking process to rescind or revise the WOTUS rule. As this process continues, it is important that states have a clear rule that defines WOTUS based on objectively identifiable characteristics in order to reasonably administer the program within their borders.

4. Tax Reform

The current Administration is working on an overhaul of the federal tax system. PABC supports favorable tax reform legislation for agribusiness.

5. Highway Infrastructure (State/Federal)

PABC is in support of efforts to secure federal funding for South Carolina's infrastructure and also will be monitoring the progress of the infrastructure funding bill approved in 2017.

6. Energy Issues (State/Federal)

Offshore Drilling - *PABC has not taken a position on offshore drilling. On the federal level, the current administration has authorized the development of a new oil and natural gas leasing plan that could include the Atlantic Coast. In response to this, the issue will be reviewed by the SC House Ag Committee with two bills proposed – one in opposition and one in support. PABC is in support of exploring alternative sources of energy that benefit the agribusiness industry.*

7. Agribusiness Trade (State/Federal)

PABC supports both state and federal efforts to enhance trade relations regarding agriculture and forest products.