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April 17, 2013

The Honorable Yancey McGill
SC Senate
PO Box 142
Columbia, SC 29202

Dear Senator McGill:

As a longtime leader in South Carolina, we thank you for your interest in agribusiness development. Because of your work in the SC Senate and state, we have made significant progress in promoting the leading industry, agribusiness, which includes agriculture and forestry.

Palmetto AgriBusiness Council collaborated with the following agencies and organizations to develop a summary of agribusiness funding needs: SC Department of Agriculture (SCDA), SC Forestry Commission (SCFC), SC Department of Commerce (SCDOC), SC Farm Bureau, SC Forestry Association, Clemson University and SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT).

The Agribusiness community is now at the point where there is need to take the financial support from the state to the next level and solicit your help in securing funding for the following items:

1. Technical support positions within the SCDA and the SCFC to work with the SCDOC in their agribusiness recruiting and expansion initiatives. Forestry has requested \$75,000 for this in their budget; SCDA requests an additional \$75,000 for their budget.
2. Support for the emerging farmer initiative requested by Clemson University PSA in this year's Senate hearing budget to fund a position dedicated to helping small farmers navigate the issues of growing, packaging and marketing fruits and vegetables for local markets.
3. \$200,000 to develop and support the certified food processing site concept on a statewide basis.
4. Support for AgriTourism within the SCPRT budget to develop a BBQ trail and other AgriTourism initiatives.
5. In support of these initiatives, we commit to quarterly updates and planning meetings and will continue to work with regional economic development groups and local county economic developers to expand and recruit agribusinesses to their regions.

In our quarterly meetings during the coming year, we pledge to develop long-term initiatives that will even further expand the agribusiness economy. Many accomplishments have been achieved over the last several years including SCDA's SC Certified Grown program, funding for a FTE agribusiness project manager at the SCDOC in coordination with the SCDA and SCFC thanks to the support of the General Assembly, and rapidly increasing agricultural and forestry exports through the Charleston Port.

With your support and the state's investment, we can continue to grow agribusiness in South Carolina. Thank you for your service and leadership to the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack W. Shuler", written over a set of horizontal lines.

Jack W. Shuler
President