



2020 LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY PRIORITIES

WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

Surface Water & Ground Water Withdrawal

Surface and groundwater withdrawal legislation and regulations remain a significant issue for agribusiness. Despite the 2018 DHEC Board approval of additional capacity use areas within the state, PABC continues to believe no changes should be made to water legislation and regulations until the completion of the Statewide Assessment of Water Resources, and all decisions regarding water withdrawal should be based on sound science.

Dams and Reservoirs Standards

The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee passed S.107 with some minor amendments out of committee during the spring of 2019. The \$50,000 tax credit has been a point of debate and the matter has been committed to the Senate Finance Committee. To date, PABC has been supportive of the bill as amended.

Waters of the U.S. aka “WOTUS” (Federal)

WOTUS has continued to be challenged in several federal district courts within the U.S. Improvement has occurred under the present administration as to this federal regulation. During 2019, a bill has been introduced to scale back federal jurisdiction over water.

TAXES AND FEES

SC Tax Reform – Maintain Agribusiness Sales Tax Exemptions/Property Tax Assessments

As a result of a SC House Tax Policy Review Committee’s review of South Carolina’s tax code system, including sales tax exemptions and property tax assessments, H.4532 was filed in May of 2019 specifically relating to sales tax exemptions. Tax treatment for agribusiness continues to be an issue to monitor in an effort to assure we maintain all agribusiness sales tax exemptions and ag use property tax assessments.

Agribusiness Trade (State/Federal)

Several tariffs announced on Chinese products continue to negatively impact agribusiness operations. The China log ban on softwood logs exported from South Carolina continues to have a negative impact on the state’s forestry industry. The USMCA proposal to replace NAFTA will impact agribusiness. Each of these trade issues should be monitored closely as to the effects upon SC agribusiness.

Business License Fees

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

LEGAL

Nuisance Lawsuit “Safe Harbor” Consideration

As nuisance lawsuits relating to agribusiness operations in other states continue to negatively impact the agribusiness industry as a whole, a “safe harbor” solution should likely be considered within SC either by strengthening the SC Right to Farm statutory provisions or through other available legislative consideration for SC agriculture and forestry.

Immigration (Federal)

For agribusiness to remain profitable and viable for the long-term, 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.

Regulatory Freedom Act (State)

PABC opposes the addition of new regulations and modification of existing regulations that would burden agribusinesses and potentially lead to the viability of these operations becoming questionable.

TRANSPORTATION

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 issued a report identifying 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 be PABC's intention to monitor and support efforts relating to reducing insurance cost associated with commercial trucking in SC. PABC also supports efforts to attract commercial truck drivers within South Carolina to offset the current shortage that exists.

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.

Vehicle Weight Limits

Support an effort to increase agriculture and forestry commercial trucking weight limits to compare favorably with the surrounding southeastern states.

AGRIBUSINESS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Skilled Workforce Development Initiative

PABC is in support of this initiative led by the SC Trucking Association and others to promote careers in skilled trades for state funding to be allocated to the State's Technical College System to be used to build and deploy a mobile skilled professional jobs promotion workshop. Funding of \$642,000 was approved within the state budget in 2019, but was below the level requested. PABC supports efforts within agribusiness to assist in supplementing state funding toward this initiative.

Rural Utilities and Telecommunications Infrastructure

Access to broadband continues to be an issue in rural areas of South Carolina.

FUNDING

Agency Funding

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

AgriBusiness Economic Development

PABC will support the agribusiness economic development efforts of the SC Department of Agriculture and SC Forestry Commission.