

Useful tips:

To look up your legislator, simply go to the State House website and enter your zip code into the legislator finder: <http://www.scstatehouse.net/cgi-bin/zipcodesearch.exe>

When speaking with your state Representative or Senator, always be polite and friendly. You can expect the same treatment from them! You will want to state your name and where you live and then tell them what you do and why generally you are calling.

With respect to our water concerns, the Senate Agriculture Committee passed on to the Senate an unacceptable water permitting bill, S.428. Sen. Phil Leventis (D-Sumter) has put a minority report on the bill, which keeps it on the contested calendar (and thus off the Senate floor) unless a two-thirds majority overrules him. It is important to let our Senators know that we oppose S.428 in its current form.

You will want to read over these talking points and internalize them before calling your legislator. It is also effective to compose a letter around them and then send to your legislators. Written letters work much better than emails.

Talking points:

- I oppose S. 428 as approved by the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.
- It is critical for our state to have the authority to regulate and manage its finite water resources.
- Any legislation that seeks to manage and allocate our public water resources must consider the public's right to clean, abundant water. South Carolina's waters belong to the people, and thus we have a collective duty to pass them to future generations in as good or better condition than we found them.
- As approved by the Senate Agriculture Committee, S.428 benefits private industries at the public's expense. It gives preference to those standing to make great financial gain from the use of our shared resource, while placing too great a burden on citizens to prove that their interests should be protected.
- A critical component of S.428 relates to how much water should be kept in our rivers and streams for public uses like boating, fishing and swimming, and how much to allocate to future commercial uses. These allocations should be established by minimum instream flow and minimum water level standards. The state must adopt strong standards that maintain the biological, chemical and physical integrity of the surface water. These standards must allow for the normal seasonal variations in flow that are critical to maintaining a healthy riverine environment.
- As written, S.428 does not include strong minimum instream flow standards.
- The current bill further stipulates that minimum flow guidelines would not even apply to any of South Carolina's "regulated" rivers. This includes most of our major river basins, including the Pee Dee, Catawba, Santee, Broad, Saluda and Savannah. Any legislation that fails to provide adequate minimum instream flows for the state's largest rivers - those most likely to be used by new water withdrawers - fails to uphold the public good.

- I appreciate the efforts of Senators to pass a bill that manages our water resources. Jobs, communities, industry, recreation and productive fisheries depend upon the careful balance of water use by both the public and private users. The current bill, however, does not achieve that balance. Please make sure the above concerns are addressed before voting in favor of S.428. Thank you for your consideration.