



CONSERVATION  
COMMON AGENDA  
2012



CONSERVATION IS  
SOUTH CAROLINA'S BUSINESS



The conservation community is working together to create a healthy future for all South Carolinians.



# NATURAL RESOURCES ENRICH OUR ECONOMY

We can grow jobs that stay here by building on our natural and human assets: clean water, fertile farms, bountiful forests and energy entrepreneurs.

## Clean Energy Fuels New Investments

South Carolina has no coal, no uranium and no natural gas. We can reduce the billions of dollars that we send out of state for energy by adopting policies to promote “Clean Energy Independence.”

We need to adopt realistic renewable energy goals for utilities and provide them cost recovery mechanisms to be successful. Promoting energy efficiency policies would save customers billions of dollars while creating

22,000 new jobs by 2025, the equivalent of bringing six new Boeing plants to our State. We should also update building energy codes to the 2009 IECC standard and increase the solar tax credit from 25% to 35% to keep us competitive with neighboring states. Measures to enable greater utility investment in research and development efforts related to offshore wind could bring up to 20,000 manufacturing jobs and \$80 billion in revenue to the state by 2030.

## Recycling Grows Jobs

The Alcoholic Beverage Container Recycling bill will provide a sustainable stream of plastic, glass, corrugated cardboard and aluminum that will attract more processors and manufacturers to South Carolina.

New businesses, tourists and patrons of restaurants and bars expect and appreciate recycling. It's a \$52 million dollar opportunity for South Carolina, annually. Implementing recycling plans in restaurants and bars will reduce landfilling and grow our recycling rate from 22% to within reach of the state's 35% goal. The cost is comparable to the price of sending waste to landfills and the benefits are proven: in 2009, the recycling industry created 1,354 new jobs and had an economic impact of \$6.5 billion (Clemson study). The ABC Recycling bill has already passed the Senate with modifications that work for any size ABC permit holder, anywhere in South Carolina.

## Transportation Moves Business

SCDOT spends over a billion dollars in taxpayer funds each year, yet there is a 20 year backlog of maintenance and repair needs for our aging roads and bridges throughout the State.

We need legislation requiring that all funding decisions, even those of the State Infrastructure Bank, be subject to objective, criteria-based prioritization and a “fix it first” approach. Our roads are the 6th most dangerous in the country. We need a statutory commitment to allocate the lions' share of funding to maintenance and repair of the roads and bridges that facilitate trade and commerce. In order to better manage DOT as a business, the commissioners should be appointed in a way that increases their level of expertise and fiscal responsibility. Given our pressing needs, it is not acceptable for DOT to deplete its fund balance to the point that it can't even pay its contractors, or address emergency needs.

## Natural Resources are Priceless

Forestry, agriculture, outdoor recreation and tourism are big business in South Carolina: \$54 billion or one-third of the economy. That's over 450,000 jobs, or 25% of our jobs— more than manufacturing and construction combined.

A little investment goes a long way. The combined budgets of the state Agriculture Department, Forestry Commission, Department of Natural Resources and Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism account for less than one percent of the state budget. Businesses benefit from agency expertise, public/private partnerships and the federal funds that agencies attract. While we continue to press for more accountability and transparency for the DHEC permitting process, we believe it is critical to adequately fund DHEC to monitor clean air and water and ensure public health.

The Conservation Bank has protected more than 156,000 acres of our state's family farms, working forests, parks, historic sites and recreational streams at the bargain price of \$534 per acre. Places for outdoor recreation, such as hiking, hunting and fishing, create a high quality of life that attracts tax-paying businesses and residents to our communities. The Bank's work is not complete but unless legislation passes the Senate this year to extend the Conservation Bank's “sunset” to 2023, it will cease to exist in 2013.





## Water is “Savings in the Bank”

We must be good stewards of our natural Carolina Bays, groundwater and wetlands because they protect water quality and wildlife habitat, and provide flood control, filtration and storage.

The Supreme Court recently ruled that the historic Pollution Control Act of 1972 guarantees that citizens have a say in what happens to the water they depend on for recreation, drinking and their livelihood. The decision requires a permit to discharge pollutants into ground and surface water, including state wetlands, and would protect hundreds of square miles of Carolina Bays and wetlands all over South Carolina that are currently at risk. It is important to uphold the

Pollution Control Act in order to protect our valuable waters, allow citizens to protect themselves from pollution, and to prevent DHEC from entering into private deals that allow polluters to damage water resources without public participation in the decision.



The following conservation organizations support the 2012 legislative priorities for the Common Agenda vision of Investing in Conservation to create jobs in SC:

American Institute of Architects (AIA/SC)  
American Rivers, Southeast Region  
Audubon South Carolina  
Beaufort County Open Land Trust  
Catawba Riverkeeper  
Charleston Waterkeeper  
Coastal Conservation League  
Community Open Land Trust  
Conestee Foundation, Inc.  
Congaree Land Trust  
Congaree Riverkeeper  
Conservation Voters of SC Education Fund  
Environmental Education Association of SC  
Friends of the Edisto  
Friends of the Reedy River  
Horry Environmental Action Team (HEAT)  
Katawba Valley Land Trust  
Kitchen Table Climate Study Group  
League of Women Voters of SC  
Lowcountry Open Land Trust  
Palmetto Conservation Foundation  
Santee Riverkeeper Alliance  
SC Alliance for Retired Americans  
SC Environmental Law Project  
SC Land Trust Network  
SC Native Plant Society  
SC Solar Council  
SC Trout Unlimited  
SC Wildlife Federation  
Sierra Club of South Carolina  
Solar Business Alliance  
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE)  
The Trust for Public Land  
U.S. Green Building Council - SC Chapter  
Wildlife Action  
Winyah Rivers Foundation  
Upstate Forever



## Make Conservation Count

- **Sign your organization up in support of the Conservation Common Agenda.** Organizations agree by consensus to support shared priorities while maintaining their own identities and missions.
- **Join a Common Agenda “Issue Team” to research and support policies.** Experts debate ideas, draft legislation and testify at legislative hearings.
- **Participate in Common Agenda events throughout the year.** Individuals attend briefings, press conferences and weekly “Tuesday Team” gatherings at the State House during the session.

Conservation Voters of South Carolina Education Fund hosts the Common Agenda and aims to make stewardship of our state’s natural resources a priority for citizens and the leaders they elect. For more information, contact Debbie Parker, Program Director, at 803-799-0716 or [debbie@cvsc.org](mailto:debbie@cvsc.org).



### Conservation Voters of South Carolina Education Fund

701 Whaley Street, Suite 207 • Columbia, SC 29201-5900

[www.makeconservationcount.org](http://www.makeconservationcount.org)



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