



February 27, 2025

Senator Tom Davis  
Chairman, Natural Resources and Economic Development Subcommittee of the Senate Finance Committee

**Re: South Carolina Forestry Commission Budget Request**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chairman Davis,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, I write to express our strong support for the South Carolina Forestry Commission's budget request to provide \$11.155 million to support its forest health, forestland conservation, and forest business recruitment programs.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

South Carolina's forest industry is a significant economic driver supporting more than 100,000 jobs in the state with an estimated \$23.2 billion total annual economic impact.<sup>1</sup> The more than 11.1 million acres of private working forests and 1.5 million acres of public forests in South Carolina are renewable resources that not only support the state's economy, they benefit the public at large by providing habitat for fish and wildlife, clean air and water, open space, and outdoor recreational access. The recent closures of several mills in the region, however, threaten South Carolina's forest industry which in turn jeopardizes conservation, wildlife habitat, and access for sportsmen and women.

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Economic Impact of South Carolina's Forestry Industry." South Carolina Forestry Commission. October 2022. <https://www.scfc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/economicimpactofforestry2022.pdf>

---

**Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation**

A strong forest industry is critical to ensure that forests are managed sustainably to maintain economic viability and help prevent the conversion of forests to other land uses, and the South Carolina Forestry Commission's budget request to provide funding for a new full-time employee dedicated to recruiting primary and secondary forest industry to the state is an innovative proposal that we hope you will approve. Alabama funds a similar position, and it has been successful attracting new businesses to support the growth of the state's forest industry. Thus, we encourage you to approve the request to fund the forest business recruitment position.

Additionally, we support the South Carolina Forestry Commission's budget request for funding to support its forest health improvement, wildfire management, and prescribed fire programs. Actively managing the state's forest resources and providing technical assistance to landowners to manage their forestlands reduces wildfire risk, improves wildlife habitat, and increases forest resilience to insects and diseases to maintain healthy forests.

We also strongly support the request to provide funding for a forestland conservation position. The Palmetto State is one of the fastest growing states in the country, and the forestlands that South Carolina's sportsmen and women depend on for places to hunt and fish are at risk because of the rate at which forestlands are subdivided and developed. We encourage you to approve the request to fund the forestland conservation position to increase the agency's capacity to conserve working forests to support South Carolina's outdoor sporting traditions and the state's forest industry. Hunters in South Carolina support 10,100 jobs, \$315 million in salaries and wages, and \$59 million in state and local taxes, with a total economic effect of \$1.126 billion.<sup>2</sup> By supporting forestland conservation, you would further support South Carolina's outdoor heritage and economy.

In closing, CSF strongly supports the South Carolina Forestry Commission's budget request, and we respectfully encourage you to approve their request to support South Carolina's forest industry, conserve working forests, and protect hunting and fishing traditions for future generations. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



John Culclasure  
Senior Director, Forest Policy  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
[jculclasure@congressionalsportsmen.org](mailto:jculclasure@congressionalsportsmen.org)

---

<sup>2</sup> "Economic Impacts of Hunting and Target Shooting – Technical Report." Southwick Associates, produced for the Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation. December 2021. <https://sportsmensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2020-Economic-Impact-of-Hunting-and-Shooting-Technical-Report-V2.pdf>