



February 18, 2025

Senator Chip Campsen  
Chairman, Senate Fish, Game, and Forestry Committee  
305 Gressette Building  
Columbia, SC 29201

**Re: Senate Bill 165; South Carolina Conservation Education Act**

**Position: Support**

Dear Chairman Campsen and Members of the Senate Fish, Game, and Forestry Committee,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 165 which would establish the South Carolina Conservation Education Fund for the purpose of connecting youth with nature through classroom and outdoor natural resource conservation education.

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.

In a world that is becoming increasingly distant from nature, opportunities to provide funding for conservation education are pivotal to ensuring the health and well-being of South Carolina's youth. Today's youth are constantly exposed to technology that further creates a barrier to enjoying the outdoors and our time-honored traditions of hunting, fishing, trapping and recreational shooting. Young sportsmen and women that are being recruited into hunting and fishing and developing an appreciation for conservation today will shape the future of tomorrow's sporting conservation landscape, including the "user pays – public benefits" structure of the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF). As today's sportsmen and women age out of the sport, they take their critical license dollars with them, leaving a funding gap to be filled by the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and recreational shooters.

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Funds distributed to the South Carolina Conservation Education Fund will be used for natural resource conservation education classes and programs that will, in part, help recruit the next generation of sportsmen and women needed to sustain conservation funding needed to support South Carolina's outdoor traditions. Participation in hunting specifically has been on a general decline for years. Efforts like establishing the South Carolina Conservation Education Fund will help to further increase hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts. Recruiting the next generation of South Carolina's sportsmen and women who will ultimately contribute to the ASCF is essential to maintaining our sporting conservation legacy for generations to come.

For example, in 2023 alone, South Carolina's sportsmen and women generated over \$39.9 million for state-based conservation through hunting and fishing license sales and matching Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program funds.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, hunters in South Carolina support 10,100 jobs, \$315,000,000 in salaries and wages, and \$59,000,000 in state and local taxes, with a total economic effect of \$1,126,000,000.<sup>2</sup> By investing in conservation education, Senate Bill 165 would further support South Carolina's outdoor heritage and economy.

In closing, we respectfully encourage you to support Senate Bill 165 to help conserve South Carolina's hunting and fishing traditions for future generations. Thank you for considering our comments, and please let us know if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,



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<sup>1</sup> <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.congressionalsportsmen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/09204845/South-Carolina-ASCF-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sportsmensalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2020-Economic-Impact-of-Hunting-and-Shooting-Technical-Report-V2.pdf>