



A CONSERVATION VOTER

Conservation is a family affair for Iris W. Freeman. A direct descendant of John Winthrop, founder of the Massachusetts Bay colony in 1629, Freeman first visited Aiken in 1967 with her late brother, Adam Winthrop. Adam succeeded in saving an equestrian and pedestrian open space located in Aiken's historic horse district and Freeman took notice of Aiken's charm.

As Aiken grew so too did the need for land conservation. Freeman subscribes to Will Rogers' philosophy on land: they're not making any more of it. For Freeman, this demands action. "If you enjoy a place like Aiken, then you also must realize that you need to take action in order to preserve what you love about it."

She recalls sitting around the kitchen table with family discussing the possibility of an Aiken land trust to meet the community's needs "so South Carolina can learn from other states' mistakes and successes." In 1999 she co-founded the Aiken County Open Land Trust (ACOLT) and served as its first president.

Now, Freeman spends most of her time in Aiken with her husband, Mike W.C. Freeman, a thoroughbred racehorse trainer, and their five dogs and two horses Viola and Joey. In addition to her volunteer obligations - board service for ACOLT, American Farm Land Trust, Hitchcock Woods, Groten Plantation and Proctor Academy - Freeman enjoys spending time at Chime Bell Farm, her 230-acre horse farm.

As for her politics, the bumper stickers on her car tell the story well. One sticker for Governor Mark Sanford - she likes his record on land conservation. One sticker for first cousin John Kerry's 2004 Presidential campaign. Another sticker for American Farmland Trust and a fourth for Conservation Voters of South Carolina.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES BRIEFINGS

- April 22 - Earth Day
- April 22 - Wine & hors d'oeuvres with Ann Timberlake, Camden
- April 29 - Annual Conservation Day Oyster Roast, Columbia
- May 1 - Legislative Crossover Day
- May 3 - Cocktails & hors d'oeuvres at Secessionville Manor, James Island
- May 6 - Cocktails & hors d'oeuvres at the White Homestead, Fort Mill
- June 1 - Primary Election Day

2008 ORGANIZATION LOBBY DAYS

- April 8 - SC Wildlife Federation Camo Coalition
- April 15 - SC Alliance for Sustainable Campuses and Communities
- April 29 - Annual Conservation Day
- May 13 - Audubon South Carolina
- May 20 - Kitchen Table Climate Study Group
- May 27 - SC Land Trust Network

Conservation Voters of South Carolina hosted the national League of Conservation Voters annual conference in Charleston from March 27-30. Thirty-five affiliate state voter leagues met to share best practices and learn about national trends in the conservation movement.



LEFT: Phil Greenberg, Executive Director Ann Timberlake, VP of LCV State Capacity Building Ed Zuckerman and Holly Hook at the kick-off reception on Thursday, March 27, at Cathy Forrester's historic home.



EDUCATION. ACCOUNTABILITY. RESULTS.

WILL GREEN BE THE NEW BLACK?

Will legislators "walk the walk" to make efficiency and renewables the way to meet future energy needs?

Ironically, South Carolinians enjoy comparatively low power rates per kilowatt but pay some of the highest average utility bills in the country. South Carolina is the third highest electricity user per capita in the country.

Soaring energy prices and environmental concerns have elevated interest in efficiency and renewables as the cheapest, cleanest and fastest way to meet our growing energy needs. Senator Glenn McConnell (R-Charleston) and Representative Phillip Lowe (R-Florence) recently introduced an Energy Efficiency Package to address this growing need and to lead South Carolina toward a clean energy future. The Energy Efficiency Package is the latest recognition that South Carolinians are increasingly embracing efficiency and renewable energy sources as one of our state's "first fuels." The package includes:

Senate Bill 1140 establishes energy efficiency and renewable energy goals for state government and directs state agencies to procure efficient products in the future, like replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

Senate Bill 1141/House Bill 4763 provides consumers a \$750 rebate and sales tax exemption for the purchase of Energy Star certified manufactured homes in South Carolina.

Senate Bill 1142 provides a state income tax credit for the purchase of photovoltaic, solar and fuel cell property and provides a sales tax exemption for the purchase of equipment that produces electricity from renewable sources.

Senate Bill 1143/House Bill 4761 provides two one-month sales tax holidays for the purchase of energy efficient appliances: October, National Energy Efficiency Month, and April, National Earth Month.

Because rising energy prices disproportionately impact the economically disadvantaged, Sen. McConnell also sponsored "Operation Empowered" (S.1076) to create a private, nonprofit fund. "Operation Empowered represents precisely the kind of bold, visionary thinking that is in the best interest of the environment and economy," said Bruce Wood, owner of Sunstore Solar.

Other legislators are pushing bills to make our state's energy greener. Representatives Laurie Funderburk (D-Kershaw) and Mac Toole (R-Lexington) are sponsoring a bill (H.3395), requiring the SC Energy Office and the Office of Regulatory Staff to provide the General Assembly with recommendations on establishing a net metering program. This bill has passed the full House and is now under review in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Senator Jim Ritchie (R-Spartanburg) is asking the state to invest in a "green fleet" in order to run state government more efficiently for taxpayers. Senate Bill 368, part of an energy efficiency package introduced in 2007 by Sen. Ritchie, encourages the state's fleet management program to purchase hybrid vehicles, and is being reviewed by the full House in the upcoming weeks.

"South Carolina is undergoing unprecedented growth, bringing with it both tremendous economic opportunities and increased demands on our energy sector," said Sen. Ritchie. "How we meet growing demand will determine not only our state's economic future, but the health and sustainability of our communities."

Representative Joan Brady (R-Richland) is also pursuing energy reform in state government with H.4705. Rep. Brady's bill establishes a pilot program whereby three state agencies, the Budget and Control Board, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Health and Environmental Control, must purchase at least one percent of their electricity from green power programs.

Several legislators are working on free-market incentives that encourage industry, entrepreneurs, government agencies and consumers to "go green." By "priming the pump" with tax breaks, rebates and investments, elected leaders aim to unleash the ingenuity and determination of our state's business community.

Studies done by the South Carolina Electric Cooperatives demonstrate that within 10 years, South Carolina can produce 1700 megawatts of electricity - the equivalent of three new coal plants - through efficiency and renewable energy. If the General Assembly will enact these bills this year, consumers and entrepreneurs are poised to seize the potential of the "green" economy to lead our state into a strong, energy-independent future.



HOLDING ELECTED LEADERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR A SAFE, CLEAN AND HEALTHY SOUTH CAROLINA

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ELECTION REPORT

PRIMARY RACES TO WATCH

Conservation Voters believes the June primary election contests are essential to building a bipartisan conservation majority. Over 80 percent of South Carolina's 170 legislative districts have been drawn to benefit a particular party. This has led to increasingly competitive intra-party primaries and less competitive general election contests between Republicans and Democrats.

Demographics in 22 Senate and 58 House districts strongly favor Republicans, while Democrats hold sway over 16 Senate and 42 House seats. Because South Carolina voters do not register by party, prior election performance and demographics are used to classify districts as solidly Republican, Democratic or possible "swing" districts in a general election. Swing district races are more likely to evolve into general election contests, so our focus for the June 10 elections are on the contests that determine whom is most likely to win in the general election.

Out of the 30 primary contests that Conservation Voters is monitoring, a number of upstate races stand out. In Spartanburg, Sen. Jim Ritchie faces two well-funded candidates, attorney Max Hyde and engineer Shane Martin in a Republican primary. Ritchie's record supporting Conservation Bank funding and sponsoring energy efficiency legislation has earned him the respect of conservationists.

IN GREENVILLE, two House incumbents face primary challengers. In District 21, Republican Bob Leach faces Bill Wylie, former CEO of Goodwill Industries, and in District 23, Democrat Fletcher Smith, is opposed by Greenville city councilwoman, Chandra Dillard.

There are also three important open seat contests: Senate District 12 (Rep. Scott Talley vs. Lee Bright) and House District 32 in Spartanburg (Derham Cole, Jr. vs. Christina Jeffrey) and Senate District 5 (Rep. Phil Shoopman vs. Mike Meilinger) in Greenville County.

IN THE MIDLANDS, two Democratic Representatives with strong conservation records are seeking to move to the Senate in open contests: John Scott in Richland and Creighton Coleman in Fairfield/Chester. Scott faces Richland One School Board Chair Vince Ford to replace retiring Sen. Kay Patterson. Coleman and attorney Leah Moody are vying for Sen. Linda Short's seat.

IN SUMTER COUNTY, Sen. Phil Leventis, a proven conservation champion, faces former Democratic House member Mac McLeod – while in Aiken County, Republicans Brad Bonnie, County Councilman Scott Singer and attorney Tom Young are squaring off in a three-way primary to replace retiring Rep. Skipper Perry.

IN THE LOWCOUNTRY, the departure of conservation champion, Rep. Ben Hagood creates a void that has attracted two Republican candidates: Mt. Pleasant City Councilman Joe Bustos and Isle of Palms Mayor Mike Sorille. Newly elected Sen. Catherine Ceips is defending her Beaufort seat from Tom Davis, Gov. Sanford's former Chief of Staff. On the Democratic side, former Rep. Thayer Rivers, a strong environmental advocate, is seeking to win back his Jasper County seat from Rep. Curtis Brantley.

Several **HORRY COUNTY** Republican races could change the face of a generally anti-conservation delegation. Sen. Luke Rankin faces Republican challengers, Liz Gilland, chair of Horry County Council and Howard Bond. Rep. Thad Viers is opposed by Steven Neeves and former Horry School Board member, Helen Smith. And four contestants have filed to run for the seat being vacated by Rep. Billy Witherspoon: George Hearn, Randy Alford, Mark Bennett and Kevin Hardee.

Are you a political junkie? For continued coverage of conservation politics check your email for The Conservation Voter Online Edition. To receive our online newsletter, email Chris Kenney at ckenney@scvoters.org.

TEST YOUR CONSERVATION IQ – 2008 BRIEFING BOOK RELEASE

Conservation Voters Education Fund is proud to release the 2008 Conservation Briefing Book. This biennial reference book enumerates the many conservation challenges facing South Carolina and suggests next steps for meeting these challenges.

Test your Conservation Briefing Book IQ with the questions below.

- 1) In 2006, how many of South Carolina's 24 major rivers were listed on the Department of Health and Environmental Control's (DHEC) registry of impaired waters.
a. 1
b. 6
c. 12
d. 24
- 2) South Carolina has one of the fastest rates of land development in the country, ranking 10th in the rate of conversion of farmland and forestland to urban use. How many acres does South Carolina convert each day?
a. 25 acres per day
b. 100 acres per day
c. 200 acres per day
d. 1000 acres per day
- 3) South Carolina spends ____ annually importing energy from out of state.
a. \$1 million
b. \$100 million
c. \$1 billion
d. \$100 billion
- 4) According to the SC Energy Office, South Carolina is the ____ consumer of electricity per capita, in the nation.
a. 3rd highest
b. 8th highest
c. 23rd highest
d. 42nd highest
- 5) The Conservation Bank protects land at the average cost to taxpayers of ____.
a. \$600/acre
b. \$1200/acre
c. \$3600/acre
d. Whatever the market price is.
- 6) Stormwater Runoff is ____.
a. Treated at a water treatment facility.
b. Sediment, nutrients and pollutants washed into the nearest stream.
c. Taken into account by developers prior to construction.
d. A new event at the Summer Olympics.

Answers: 1) D 2) C 3) C 4) A 5) A 6) B

Score: Five or Six Correct – We need you to help lobby elected leaders
Three or Four Correct – Check the Briefing Book to improve your IQ
Two to Zero Correct – You need a copy of the Briefing Book, ASAP

The Conservation Briefing Book is available at a cost of \$5 to cover printing and shipping cost. Contact Debbie Parker at 803-799-0716 or dparker@scvoters.org to receive a copy.

SAVING THE COAST IS ELEMENTARY FOR COASTMATTERS DIRECTOR



Staci Williams next to an informational Sea Turtle sign.

"I, Caretta," a children's book chronicling the lifecycle of the loggerhead sea turtle. The proceeds from the book purchased informational sea turtle signage along the South Carolina coast.

A teacher at Myrtle Beach Intermediate School since 2002, Williams looks forward to using her educational and organizing experience to rally conservationists in Horry and Georgetown Counties. She began working part-time in February and becomes a full-time staff member in June.

CoastMatters seeks to maximize the participation of conservation-minded Horry and Georgetown County citizens in public policy decisions impacting growth and

PEE DEE POWERHOUSE



Conservation Voters Education Fund's new Climate Change and Sustainability Project Director, Carolyn Jebaily, believes "the effectiveness of local government is only as good as the involvement of its citizens."

In 2003, Jebaily organized Responsible Economic Development (RED), to challenge a Wal-Mart SuperCenter development because of its impact on neighborhoods, schools and the environment. RED's case went to the State Supreme Court and lost, but not before mobilizing and galvanizing the conservation community behind sensible zoning, land use and watershed protection issues.

Jebaily is a former Conservation Chair for the Pee Dee Sierra Club, where she initiated the Jeffries Creek Preservation Project that advocates for the protection of the local watershed. As Senior Vice President of Environment for Wildlife ACTION, Jebaily pursued funding for the Conservation Bank, preservation of Heritage Trust lands and the removal of unlawful river shacks, among other issues.

Conservation Voters Education Fund is excited to have Carolyn leading our Climate Change and Sustainability program.

DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS A POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)?

A PAC is a political committee established and administered by a corporation, labor union, membership organization or trade association for the purpose of engaging in electoral activity.

In 1944, the Congress of Industrial Organization (the CIO is part of today's AFL-CIO) was looking for ways to help reelect President Franklin Roosevelt. However, the Smith Connally Act of 1943 prohibited labor unions from contributing funds to federal candidates. In an attempt to circumvent the law, CIO urged their members to make individual contributions to Roosevelt's campaign. Thus PACs were born.

Since then, states and the federal government have added rules to govern the raising and spending of PAC dollars. For example, in South Carolina, individuals, corporations or partnerships may contribute \$3,500 per election cycle to a single PAC.

Today, PACs are often derided as "corrupt special interest money." While it is true that a PAC represents a special interest, it represents the interest of the individuals contributing to the PAC.

Conservation Voters PAC represents our members and our commitment to a safe, clean and healthy environment through more accountable state government. Does that make Conservation Voters PAC a "special interest"? Absolutely.

Members often ask "why should I contribute to your PAC and not directly to conservation candidates?" In short, you should do both, especially if you are able to tell your candidate that you are supporting him or her because of their position on conservation issues. One advantage to contributing to Conservation Voters PAC is that when candidates receive a contribution from our PAC, they know that support is the result of their pro-conservation record.

A Letter from the



CONSERVATION OFFERS REAL CHOICE IN SC POLITICS – AND RESULTS

All too often, I hear from citizens across our state that "no good comes from politics." Another complaint is that there are not enough choices between candidates on the ballot. Certainly, there are troubling examples of elected leaders failing the public trust. And choices can appear limited, especially when incumbents are rarely challenged for reelection. In 2006, for example, 60 percent of the 124 House seats were unopposed.

But from our perspective at Conservation Voters, elections have never been a more important vehicle for positive change in our state. On both sides of the aisle, politicians' records on the environment create clear distinctions between candidates.

And we have never had a year like 2008. It is not just that all Senate and House seats are on the ballot. In a state where incumbents are almost guaranteed to win, over ten percent of the contests have already been declared open. Six Senators are retiring and sixteen House members are either leaving or running for higher office. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for conservationists.

Currently we can count on just over 40 percent of the Legislature as reliable pro-conservation votes. Our goal is to attain a bipartisan majority by 2010, and 22 new Senators and Representatives can make the difference. We will work in as many of these open contests as possible to elect new allies.

The good news is that neither party in South Carolina has a monopoly on conservation values. And increased competition between candidates to be seen by voters as truly "green" invites more public discussion about the importance of clean and reliable water, breathable air and protected land for sport and recreation.

However, elections are not an end but a means. Now is the time to educate candidates about issues and to ask the hard questions. We want to know, for example, if candidates will commit to incremental funding for the Conservation Bank to protect South Carolina's special places or if they believe communities should be able to collect impact fees from developers to help pay for new schools and infrastructure. We need to know if candidates will push aggressively for energy efficiency measures or if they will support a moratorium on the construction of new coal plants until need and environmental impact can be independently evaluated.

We invite you to help us and let us know what you are hearing and thinking about these races. Candidates seeking our endorsement participate in a multi-step process that includes an evaluation of a candidate's previous conservation record, questionnaire and interview responses and an objective analysis of the candidate's viability.

Endorsed candidates benefit from our counsel, the financial support of our Political Action Committee and our direct communication with voters. And we all benefit by electing better stewards of our environment to make the right decisions to create a healthy and safe future for South Carolina.

Ann J. Timberlake

Ann Timberlake is the Executive Director of Conservation Voters

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR