Grading South Carolina’s Governor

South Carolina’s clean air, water, land and wildlife are the roots of our economy and at the heart of who we are as a state. Our natural resources support good health; they enrich our lives. Forestry, agriculture, outdoor recreation and tourism account for $54 billion or one-third of our economy1. They provide 25% of our jobs.2

Our first Conservation Report Card evaluates Governor Nikki Haley’s conservation record: her commitment to conserving South Carolina’s natural resources and the impact of her administration on the health of our economy and our people.

In a state dominated by the legislature, the ability of a Governor to lead and collaborate is of utmost importance. Has Governor Haley made South Carolina a better place for us to live and raise our families? Is she leading us in the right direction?

Overall Grade: D

South Carolinians have historically valued the outdoors, so it is not surprising that our Constitution explicitly names “natural resources” as a matter of public concern3. Thankfully, in South Carolina, both Republicans and Democrats embrace conservation.

Conservation Voters believes that a Governor should defend the protection of our natural resources as a core function of government. We expect a Governor to champion clean air and clean water as our birthright. We want the Governor to advocate for funding the natural resource agencies that drive our tourism, farming and forestry economy. We count on our Governor to promote clean energy and to stand against pollution.

In this first Report Card on the Executive Branch, we are struck by how little attention Governor Haley has paid to conservation of South Carolina’s natural resources. Conservation Voters believes the Governor has missed the mark in four important areas: protecting our natural resources, energizing our economy, defending our health and leading for the future.

Accordingly, we give Governor Nikki Haley the disappointing grade of D for her first three years in office.

-Ann Timberlake, Executive Director, Conservation Voters of South Carolina

WHAT WOULD A GREEN GOVERNOR DO?

Make natural resources a core function of government.

A Governor would wholeheartedly support the conservation community during transition, make wise and timely appointments to Boards and Commissions and designate an experienced natural resource advisor on the senior staff.

Challenge South Carolina utilities to lower energy costs.

A Governor would propose a Clean Energy Roadmap to promote energy efficiency, remove barriers to solar and wind power initiatives and utilize the Public Service Commission to invest in a healthy mix of renewable generation.

Invest in farms, forests and local communities.

A Governor would appoint qualified DHEC Board members, listen to farmers and forest managers and utilize the Public Service Commission to invest in a healthy mix of renewable generation.

Stand up to polluters and guard against waste.

A Governor would appoint qualified DHEC Board members, listen to farmers and forest managers and utilize the Public Service Commission to invest in a healthy mix of renewable generation.

Prepare for increased flooding from extreme weather.

A Governor would take the recommendations in DNR’s Climate Report seriously and convene local discussions in coastal communities to consider how to mitigate impacts of extreme weather and avoid the worst consequences.

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CVSC has produced this Governor’s Report Card, as well as biennial Legislative Scorecards, to help you stay informed about how your elected officials are protecting South Carolina’s natural resources. You can find these publications online, in addition to footnotes for the Report Card, at www.cvsc.org.

A Report Card to the People of South Carolina on Governor Nikki Haley

2011-2013

“The health, welfare, and safety of the lives and property of the people of this State and the conservation of its natural resources are matters of public concern.”

Article XII, Section 1, SC Constitution

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3. Constitution of South Carolina, Article X, Section 1.
IMPLEMENTATION

Governor Haley has pursued national aspirations rather than focus on the vulnerability of the Coast and engage South Carolinians in a conversation about preparing and adapting to changes from extreme weather.

Extreme Weather
Governor Haley has pursued national aspirations rather than focus on the vulnerability of the Coast and engage South Carolinians in a conversation about preparing and adapting to changes from extreme weather. The controversy surrounding the "retirement" of DNR's Director in late 2011, which came at the request of a Board Chair appointed by the Governor, raised questions about whether the agency was capable of addressing threats to drinking water from leaking coal ash ponds adjacent to the Waccamaw River. The controversy was intensified by the Governor's failure to prepare South Carolina for the future. A Green Governor would boast about our bounteous natural resources and our pride in their stewardship. A Green Governor would tout our mountains and beaches, our clean rivers, our productive farms and forests. A Green Governor would say that these are what make South Carolina a good place in which to live, work, and play.

The Governor ignores the value of South Carolina's natural resources. Although Governor Haley has tried to mask the truth in failing to recognize the value of the natural resources that drive our economy, Anchor our health and provide our water. The Governor is out of step with South Carolina's people and environment her priority.

Governor Haley fails to prepare South Carolina for the future. Despite the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina and the social and environmental impacts of climate change, the Governor has sent the wrong message about the future of the state. A Green Governor would commit to addressing climate change and mitigating its impact on the state. A Green Governor would recognize that climate change is not a problem for the future; it is a problem for the present.

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