As stewards of our air, land, and water, we care about how government functions. Our economy prospers when politicians are transparent, regulations are fairly enforced and dollars wisely spent.

**Full disclosure of the sources of income and independent investigation of complaints ensure a level playing field for the conduct of the public’s business.** Currently, ethics complaints are handled by committees made up of fellow legislators who can dismiss charges in secret without any other input. While not perfect, Senator Campsen’s amendment to H. 3945 makes significant strides in improving both ethical standards for our public officials and the enforcement system for members of the General Assembly. Restoring confidence in governance should help attract more qualified candidates to run for office.

**The draft recommendations of the Governor’s Regulatory Review Task Force include roll-backs of protections for clean water and clear air.** We urge lawmakers to focus on improving regulatory efficiencies without risking the health of the public or the environment. South Carolinians benefit most when business and conservation goals are complimentary.

We oppose efforts to undo the “automatic stay” compromise of 2008. A stay protects citizens’ rights and prevents irreversible damage by halting work on a contested project while the permit for that project is legally reviewed. For the thousands of permits issued by DHEC in a given year, only a limited number are impacted by the automatic stay, but in those instances the stay is central in upholding citizen’s rights and ensuring a fair outcome for all parties. The 2008 compromise is working: it temporarily halts disputed activity but requires timely decisions from the courts.

**Prioritization of DOT road projects must go hand in hand with increased spending to repair crumbling infrastructure.** To paraphrase Senator Harvey Peeler, priorities not politics should determine our road projects. Act 114 was passed to require SCDOT to prioritize projects based on objective criteria – but the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) has no such prioritization. The SIB bonds money for major road projects, creating a scenario where political expediency too often drives its bonding decisions. We support legislation requiring the SIB to implement “Act 114-like” prioritization for project selection and we will insist that transportation funding proposals, such as H.3412, include Act 114 prioritization.

**PRIORITY ACTIONS**

- Pass substantive ethics reform through H.3945 (and Sen. Campsen’s amendment).
- Uphold environmental protections.
- Protect citizens’ right to an “automatic stay.”
- Support DOT project prioritization.