



HENRY DARGAN McMASTER
GOVERNOR

January 31, 2025

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Ms. Myra Reece
Interim Director
S.C. Department of Environmental Services
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

RE: *WaterSC Status Update and Request for Guidance on the Application of
Executive Order No. 2024-22*

Dear Director Reece:

Thank you for your January 31, 2025 letter, a copy of which is enclosed, regarding the above-referenced matter. I write to express my appreciation both for your leadership of the WaterSC Water Resources Working Group (“WaterSC”) and for the status update contained in your recent correspondence. In accordance with Section 2(D) of Executive Order No. 2024-22, I also write in response to your request for additional guidance and clarification regarding Section 1(A)(2) and (3) of the above-referenced Order.

As noted in your letter, WaterSC has convened monthly since October 2024, and its participants have worked closely with stakeholders and sector constituents to prepare for those meetings. WaterSC has also heard from the public concerning South Carolina’s water resources through submitted comments and a public listening session earlier this month. I commend the WaterSC participants for their diligence in analyzing the various issues related to the State’s water resources and thoughtfully considering any necessary additions or changes to current law to ensure sustainable surface water withdrawal practices and procedures. As contemplated by Section 1(A)(2) of Executive Order No. 2024-22, it is my understanding that you recently provided an update on WaterSC’s activities to the other members of the Surface Water Study Committee (“SWSC”) established by Proviso 117.184 of the 2024–25 Appropriations Act, Act No. 226 of 2024. While I recognize that WaterSC’s work remains ongoing, I am encouraged by the considerable progress WaterSC has made to date and by the collaborative efforts to ensure that WaterSC’s initiatives simultaneously support the SWSC’s work.

It is my understanding that during the January 23, 2025 meeting, the SWSC voted unanimously to seek an extension of the deadline imposed by Proviso 117.184 and to request authorization to expand the study committee's scope to include the current state of groundwater in South Carolina and other topics related to surface water and groundwater. To these ends, one of the SWSC's co-chairmen, Representative Hixon, recently introduced a proposed joint resolution (H. 3814). Although H. 3814 is currently pending consideration in the House of Representatives, I concur with many of the views expressed during the SWSC's meeting and believe that it would be beneficial and most productive for WaterSC's ongoing activities to align with and further complement the SWSC's work, including by tracking the anticipated amendments to the SWSC's reporting deadlines.

In light of the foregoing, and for the reasons stated, I am providing the following supplemental guidance and clarification to WaterSC and the Department of Environmental Services ("DES") regarding the application of Section 1(A)(2) and (3) of Executive Order No. 2024-22:

1. The Chair of WaterSC, or her designee, shall provide quarterly updates or reports to the SWSC on the activities and progress of WaterSC during the period preceding the SWSC meeting.
2. DES shall consider the perspectives and recommendations of WaterSC and its participants in developing the updated State Water Plan, which shall include or be accompanied by a summary of the activities of WaterSC and identify any relevant issues, recommendations, or other related matters on which the participants of WaterSC reached a consensus.

Thank you for your continued leadership and service to the State of South Carolina. I remain confident that the collaborative efforts of WaterSC, in coordination with the SWSC, will advance our State's significant interests in developing a water resources policy and plan that will balance South Carolina's economic, environmental, and social needs and ensure reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and sufficiency of our critical water resources for existing and future uses.

As always, should you have any questions or concerns or need any additional information regarding this matter or otherwise, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Yours very truly,



Henry Dargan McMaster

Enclosure