

SC Conservation Coalition – 2019 Priorities

The SC Conservation Coalition is a coalition of organizations and individuals working with citizens across South Carolina to ensure future generations continue to enjoy the blessings of our richly diverse state. Our vision for South Carolina's prosperous future is one where natural resources are recognized as an irreplaceable part of our economy and where economic development and conservation goals align to create a higher quality of life than either could accomplish alone.



1. Inject Competition into the Energy Marketplace

In the wake of the failure of V.C. Summer and considering the institutional energy reforms enacted and under review, the Conservation Coalition believes the time is ripe to chart a new path forward for how we obtain energy in our state – rooted in market competition and choice. With energy competition, South Carolina can grow thousands of jobs and drive down energy bills for ratepayers across the state. The Coalition supports efforts to lift the 2% cap on net metering for residential customers, give corporate and industrial customers the ability to contract for clean and affordable energy, ensure that utilities buy independent power when it is equal to or cheaper than monopoly power, and provide access to the bill-reducing benefits of clean energy options to ALL South Carolinians.

2. Uphold Citizens' Rights to Clean Air and Water

Citizens' rights form the core of the Coalition's Vision of clean and abundant water and air and healthy communities. Yet, all too often citizens have watched as our beaches, rivers, wetlands and wildlife habitat have been degraded, having been prevented from protecting themselves and their families from hazards like the Pinewood toxic dump on Lake Marion. The Conservation Coalition supports efforts to recognize and guarantee that citizens have meaningful rights to a clean and healthy environment and that the State protects these rights by working to protect human health and the environment.

3. Prevent Offshore Drilling and Seismic Testing

With a groundswell of support from every coastal community in South Carolina and hundreds more up and down the east coast, offshore drilling in the Atlantic was taken off the table in 2016. Unfortunately, the threat of drilling appeared again in 2017 with additional announcements expected in 2019. The Conservation Coalition believes that there is simply no place along our coast where drilling makes sense. We oppose any new plans for drilling off the Atlantic coast, as well as seismic testing, because we know that any effort to open our coast to dirty and dangerous offshore drilling will put the quality of life and tourism economy of our coastal communities at risk.

4. Protect Home Rule (Defend Local Plastics Solutions)

Over the last few years, local communities have worked together to craft local solutions to local plastic pollution problems. These solutions are examples of home rule – a cornerstone of our governmental structure in South Carolina. The Coalition supports coastal communities like Beaufort County and the cities of Charleston, Isle of Palms, Surfside, and Folly Beach, among others, which have identified local policy solutions to fix a local problem – reducing plastic waste on our beaches. We believe that this right should be preserved, and we oppose any efforts to strip communities of home rule authority over plastic bag use.

5. Unhook the Overflows

In many communities across South Carolina, citizens receive their water and sewer service from separate providers. As a result of this multi-utility structure, a customer's sewer service can be terminated for non-payment, while still receiving water service. In several communities this has resulted in the discharge of untreated sewage into neighborhoods and local waterways, creating both environmental and public health risks. The Coalition supports efforts to require sewer providers to contact water providers prior to terminating service and require both services be disconnected at the same time to prevent the release of untreated waste into the environment.