

Week In Review

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Government Affairs

"I am going to put this entire system on trial."

Senator Tom Davis (R-Beaufort) speaking about the Department of Transportation and how the state allocates road funding during his filibuster on the roads bill this week.

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2016 Roads Debate Starts The Way It Ended

Senator Tom Davis (R-Beaufort) began the roads debate by taking to the podium much in the same way he ran out the clock on the roads debate last year. Senator Davis said he saw the groundswell a filibuster can create last year and believes there is value in the strategy again this session. Senator Davis made it clear he was not pleased with what he viewed as a lack of progress on reforming the Department of Transportation (DOT) and he planned to hold the floor until 24 senators tell him to sit down or there is a solution which seeks to hold the DOT accountable to the executive branch and not the legislature. He also explained his lack of support for a gas tax increase until we change how the money is being spent. The Senate adjourned on Thursday with Senator Davis still holding the floor and after roughly 7 hours of filibustering between Wednesday and Thursday so far. As expected with 7 hours of floor debate, the conversation periodically shifted subjects ranging from the President's ability to nominate a Supreme Court Justice to South Carolina's natural resources and even into the history of SC Governor Olin Johnston dispatching a National Guard machine gun company to take the highway department offices after he disbanded the Highway Commission in 1935.

Spillways Not Yet Open to Move Dam Bill Downstream

Numbers to Know

\$36

Million

Estimated amount spent by presidential candidates and their Super PACs in South Carolina, as of Wednesday, according to ad spending tracker SMG Delta in a report released by NBC News.

13%

Percentage of jobs in SC that require licensing through the state's government. The lowest percentage in the nation according to the White House Council of Economic

Representatives on the House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Subcommittee would likely take exception to those saying the entire house took the week off. Even during the furlough week, the committee met all day Wednesday to hear testimony on a proposal by Speaker Jay Lucas (R-Darlington) which would change the regulations under the Dams and Reservoirs Safety Act following the October floods that saw a large amount of dam breaches during the once-in-1,000 year flood. The testimony made it clear the bill still needs a lot of work before it is fully vetted and ready to move forward. The bill would require detailed inspections of hundreds of dams in heavily populated areas, require certain dam owners to post bonds to potentially remove structures if the dam endangers lives, and it would increase fines for violations. Proponents of the bill believe increasing inspections and regulations will help protect citizens and businesses downstream. However, there was a substantial amount of testimony from farmers and citizens arguing the "one-size-fits-all" regulations will raise costs and would be an unnecessary burden for many average citizens and farmers that own some of the 2,400 dams in the state. The subcommittee will meet again next year and Committee Chairman Davy Hiott (R-Pickens) has indicated they will get take their time and get this right and not rush legislation since this is a reaction to something that just happened in October.

Haley Endorses Rubio and Candidate Tracking

Governor Nikki Haley made national headlines this week when she endorsed Republican Presidential Candidate Marco Rubio. The endorsement came on Wednesday, just days before South Carolina republicans will take to the polls to vote in the primary on Saturday. Meanwhile, all the candidates have been making campaign stops all around the state and making their last push before the vote. Next week will see the republicans clear out and Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton holding all of the rallies and headlines ahead of the democrat's primary next Saturday, February 27, 2016.

House Deliberates on the Budget Next Week

The House will return from their furlough and immediately jump into budget deliberations with the

Advisors.

\$1,000

The average occupational licensing costs to the average household per year according to the same report.

\$19.1 Billion

Statewide economic impact of tourism to South Carolina announced this week.

The number represents a 5.5% increase from the previous year.

Ways and Means Committee set to meet starting Tuesday. The House is hoping to have the budget on the House floor for the week of March 21st.

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