



## Environmental Protection Subcommittee

July 1, 2021

### Minutes

The SHaPE SC Environmental Protection Subcommittee met on **July 1, 2021, at 1:30pm** at the Nexsen Pruet offices located at 1230 Main Street, Suite 700, Columbia, SC. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Tommy Lavender, Subcommittee Chair, and the following members were in attendance:

Tommy Lavender, Dr. Jeffery Allen, Art Braswell, Emily Cedzo, Michael Fields, Todd Glover, Charles Gray (for Jill Miller), Rebecca Haynes, Sara Hazzard, Erika Hollis, Harold Mitchell (virtual), Mark Nix, Myra Reece, Ken Rentiers (virtual), Bill Stangler.

Not in attendance:

John Durst, Jill Miller, Clint Leach, Gary Spires

Lawra Boyce, Senior Consultant with DHEC's Office of Operational Excellence, Megan Chase, Policy Director for Upstate Forever, and members of the public were also in attendance.

#### **Item 1: Call to Order/Welcome**

Chairman Lavender called the meeting to order, welcomed members to the meeting, and started the meeting by stating that notice of this meeting was provided to all persons, organizations and news media, which have requested notification, as required by Section 30-4-80(e) of the South Carolina Code of Laws. He then directed subcommittee members to the agenda and asked if anyone had any comments to share before getting started. He then called upon Lawra Boyce to provide a summary of the minutes from the last meeting.

#### **Item 2: Review of Minutes**

Ms. Boyce directed members to the minutes, which had been previously provided. Mr. Lavender asked the members if any corrections were needed and asked for vote to approve the minutes. Upon receiving no objections, the minutes of the June 14 meeting were approved. Mr. Lavender called upon DHEC Director Edward Simmer, MD, to provide a summary of pending legislation.

### **Item 3: Pending Legislation**

Dr. Simmer thanked the members for their participation in this effort and indicated there are two (2) bills currently pending related to restructuring the services provided by DHEC: H. 3766 and S. 2. As part of his summary, he stated that H. 3766 has had no action taken recently. He stated that S. 2, which has been referred to Committee on Medical Affairs, is proposing to abolish DHEC and its Board, Department of Mental Health and its Commission, and the Department of Alcohol and other Drug Abuse Services, move Veterans Nursing Care Facilities services from the Department of Mental Health to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and then combine the remainder into a Department of Behavioral and Public Health. He further stated that S. 2 is proposing to create a separate Department of Environmental Protection, which would include most of DHEC's current Environmental Affairs deputy area, except for the division of food and lead-risk assessments, as well as the milk and dairy lab, which would be moved to the Department of Agriculture. He also stated that S. 2 proposes that the new Department of Environmental Protection would also include the Water Resources Division that is currently in Department of Natural Resources.

Dr. Simmer continued by explaining the role of SHaPE SC in relation to the current legislative proposals. He encouraged members to comment on the best structure for health and environmental protection for the people of South Carolina, which could include recommendations related to structure as well as recommendations to improve services within the current structure. He stressed that the mission of the task force and its subcommittees is to evaluate how to best promote environmental protection and public health for all South Carolinians, while also providing jobs and economic opportunities within the state. Mr. Lavender asked the members if they had any follow-up questions. Being none, he thanked Dr. Simmer for this opportunity and for his time.

### **Item 4: Subcommittee Input**

Mr. Lavender asked the members to provide input on the current delivery of environmental services and future challenges. The members provided input focused on staff retention (salaries, facilities and equipment, career development, and skills enhancement), using compliance assistance and enforcement to provide meaningful accountability to prevent environmental issues, advocating for appropriate funding to support staff and improvements to structure, and building relationships with legislators.

### **Item 5: Next steps, public input, and other action items**

Mr. Lavender directed members to the organizational charts that had been previously provided by DHEC and asked members to review them as they prepare recommendations to discuss at the next meeting. Ms. Boyce stressed that public input is a critical component of the SHaPE SC initiative and encouraged members to request input from their stakeholders.

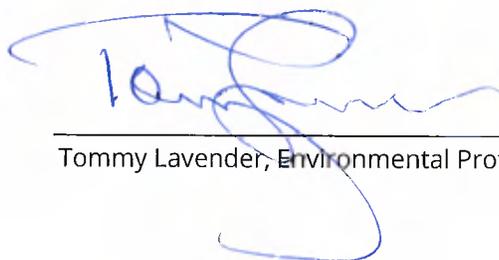
### **Item 6: Upcoming meetings and closing comments**

The subcommittee members agreed to meet again later this month to discuss specific recommendations from the subcommittee.

Being no further business, Subcommittee Chair Lavender adjourned the meeting.

Based on post-meeting feedback provided by the members, the next Environmental Protection subcommittee meeting is **scheduled to be held in-person on July 22.**

Recordings of Task Force and Subcommittee meetings can be found at the SHaPE SC website.



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Tommy Lavender, Environmental Protection Subcommittee Chair

SHaPE SC

July 22, 2021