

State of South Carolina
Department of Agriculture



Hugh E. Weathers
Commissioner

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May 26, 2016

The Honorable Wm. Weston J. Newton
Chairman, House Legislative Oversight Committee
228 Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201
HAND DELIVERED

Dear Chairman Newton,

The Department of Agriculture looks forward to working with the House Legislative Oversight Committee to inform and improve our service to South Carolina through this process. We have begun our work with the Economic Development, Transportation, Natural Resources and Regulatory Subcommittee by meeting with staff, holding an entry meeting with the subcommittee, and conducting a public survey.

Last week the House and Senate overwhelmingly supported the passage of H.4717, creating the South Carolina Farm Aid Fund. This lifeline will be a tremendous help to farmers impacted by the flood of 2015. Section 46-1-160 (B)(1) of the law states that the Department of Agriculture shall administer the grant program authorized by this section. In Section 46-1-160 (G) it states that the Department of Agriculture must administer the grant program authorized by this section using existing resources and funds. Other portions of the law speak to the timeliness of administering the program, as the Legislature heard the plea of farmers for the immediate need for financial assistance.

Administration of the South Carolina Farm Aid Fund in a timely, thorough, and equitable manner has to be the top priority of my staff and myself over the next 90 to 120 days. The gravity of the situation in which South Carolina agriculture finds itself demands that of us.

Keeping in mind the vital mission of the House Legislative Oversight Committee and the desire of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture to be fully engaged in the process with you, I respectfully ask for an appropriate extension of time, from July 13, 2016 to November 10, 2016 to provide the Program Evaluation Report.

Both of these endeavors – the administration of the Aid Fund and engagement with the House Legislative Oversight Committee - require the full attention of Department personnel to perform the work at the level expected by me, the farmers of this state, and you as Chairman of the Committee. Thank you for giving consideration to our request.

Respectfully,

Signature Redacted

Hugh E. Weathers

cc: Representative Phyllis J. Henderson

Legislative Oversight Committee
South Carolina House of Representatives
Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211
Telephone: (803) 212-6810 • Fax: (803) 212-6811



Program Evaluation Report Extension Request Guidelines

PLEASE NOTE:

The information included in the agency's report will appear online for all legislators and the public to view.

Agency Name:

Department of Agriculture

Date Request Submitted:

May 31, 2016

Background

Committee Standard Practices 10.1.3 - 10.1.5

Extensions for PER

10.1.3 The Chairman may, for reasons he determines as good cause, provide an agency an extension and new deadline to submit its Program Evaluation Report ("New Deadline"). The Chairman will not provide more than one, thirty day extension without unanimous consent from the full committee.

10.1.4. Before the Chairman will consider granting an extension, the Chairman may require the agency to provide a written letter, which may be sent via U.S. mail or included as an attachment to an email, explaining the reason the agency is requesting the extension and the number of days it is requesting, not to exceed thirty.

10.1.5 Until the agency receives a response, it should continue to complete the report to the best of its ability as if it is due on the original deadline.

Submission Process

Note this Extension Request Form will be published online.

Agency	South Carolina Department of Agriculture
Date of Submission	31-May-16

Instructions: Please complete this Extension Request Form. The completed form should be submitted electronically to the House Legislative Oversight Committee (HCommLegOv@schouse.gov) in both the original format (Excel) and saved as a PDF for online reporting. Please direct any questions about this process to Jennifer Dobson (jenniferdobson@schouse.gov) or Charles Appleby (charlesappleby@schouse.gov).

I. Extension Request

- | | | |
|---|--|------------|
| 1 | State the date the agency originally received the report guidelines: | 5/17/2016 |
| 2 | State the date the agency submitted this request for an extension: | 5/31/2016 |
| 3 | State the original deadline for the report: | 7/13/2016 |
| 4 | State the number of additional days the agency is requesting: | 120 |
| 5 | State the new deadline if the additional days are granted: | 11/10/2016 |

II. History of Extensions

- | | |
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| 1 | List the years in which the agency previously requested an extension, putting the years the extension was granted in bold: |
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III. Good Cause

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Please state good cause as to why the Committee should grant the extension requested by the agency. Please limit the response to 1,000 words or less. |
|---|---|

The House and Senate overwhelmingly supported the passage of H.4717, creating the South Carolina Farm Aid Fund. This lifeline will be a tremendous help to farmers impacted by the flood of 2015. Section 46-1-160 (B)(1) of the law states that the Department of Agriculture shall administer the grant program authorized by this section. In Section 46-1-160 (G) it states that the Department of Agriculture must administer the grant program authorized by this section using existing resources and funds. Other portions of the law speak to the timeliness of administering the program, as the Legislature heard the plea of farmers for the immediate need for financial assistance.

Administration of the South Carolina Farm Aid Fund in a timely, thorough, and equitable manner has to be the top priority of the Department of Agriculture over the next 90 to 120 days. The gravity of the situation in which South Carolina agriculture finds itself demands that of the agency.

Both of these endeavors – the administration of the Aid Fund and engagement with the House Legislative Oversight Committee - require the full attention of Department personnel to perform the work at the level expected by the Commissioner of Agriculture, the farmers of this state, and the House Legislative Oversight Committee. As a small agency, SCDA simply does not have the resources to simultaneously dedicate to both undertakings. Thank you for giving consideration to our request.

IV. Verification

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| 1 | Please state the name of the agency head, or person designated and authorized by the agency head to do so, that has approved and reviewed the information provided in this Extension Request form. | Commissioner Hugh E. Weathers |
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Submission Process

2 Does the agency head, or designated person by the agency head, affirm that the information contained in this form from the agency is complete and accurate to the extent of his or her knowledge. Yes

V. Committee Response

Leave this section blank.

1 Date extension was granted:

1-Jun-16

2 Number of additional days granted:

A 30 business-day extension is granted pursuant to Committee Standard Practice 10.1.4.

3 New deadline for agency response:

Wednesday, August 24, 2016