**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**H. 5546**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. J. Moore and King

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Introduced in the House on May 7, 2024

Currently residing in the House Committee on **Ways and Means**

Summary: South Carolina- Caribbean Islands Trade Commission

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 5/7/2024 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 170)

 5/7/2024 House Referred to Committee on **Ways and Means** (House Journal‑page 170)

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[05/07/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/5546_20240507.docx)

[05/07/2024-A](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/5546_20240507a.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING CHAPTER 79 TO TITLE 39 SO AS TO CREATE THE “SOUTH CAROLINA‑CARIBBEAN ISLANDS TRADE COMMISSION”, TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE TRADE COMMISSION, AND TO ESTABLISH THE DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Title 39 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 CHAPTER 79

 South Carolina‑Caribbean Islands Trade Commission

 Section 39‑79‑100. (A) There is established the “South Carolina‑Caribbean Islands Trade Commission” which is created to advance bilateral trade and investment between South Carolina and the Caribbean Islands. The trade commission shall consist of fifteen members to be appointed as follows:

 (1) four members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, two of whom must be members of the House of Representatives;

 (2) four members appointed by the President of the Senate, two of whom must be members of the Senate; and

 (3) seven members appointed by the Governor:

 (a) the Secretary of the Department of Commerce or his designee;

 (b) the Commissioner of Agriculture or his designee;

 (c) two representatives of state institutions of higher education;

 (d) two members representing Caribbean Americans in South Carolina or Caribbean‑American communities; and

 (e) one representative of a South Carolina business organization or a trade organization.

 (B) The members of the commission must be appointed for terms of four years each and until their successors are appointed and qualify, except that the seven members appointed by the Governor shall serve initial terms of two years each, the four members appointed by the President of the Senate shall serve initial terms of three years each, and the four members appointed by the Speaker shall serve initial terms of four years each. Members may be reappointed and must include:

 (1) the Secretary of the Department of Commerce or his designee;

 (2) the Commissioner of Agriculture or his designee;

 (3) one representative of a state institution of higher education;

 (4) at least two members representing Caribbean Americans in South Carolina or Caribbean‑American communities; and

 (5) one representative of a South Carolina business organization or a trade organization.

 (C) All appointments must be made no later than ninety days following the date of enactment of this act. A vacancy in the membership of the commission must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

 (D) Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses actually incurred in the performance of their duties, within the limit of funds appropriated to the commission or otherwise made available to it for its purposes.

 (E) The commission shall meet and hold hearings at the places it designates throughout the State.

 (F) The Governor shall designate a chairperson or co‑chairpersons from among the members of the commission, who shall serve in that capacity at the pleasure of the Governor. The chairperson or co‑chairpersons, as appropriate may appoint from among the commission members subcommittees or subcommittee chairpersons at their discretion. A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the commission.

 (G)(1) The purpose of the South Carolina‑Caribbean Islands Trade Commission is to:

 (a) advance bilateral trade and investment between South Carolina and the Caribbean Islands;

 (b) initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual interest to South Carolina and the Caribbean Islands;

 (c) promote business and academic exchanges between South Carolina and the Caribbean Islands;

 (d) encourage mutual economic support between South Carolina and the Caribbean Islands;

 (e) encourage mutual investment in the infrastructure of South Carolina and the Caribbean Islands; and

 (f) address such other issues as determined by the commission.

 (2) The commission shall report its findings, results, and recommendations to the Governor, and the General Assembly pursuant to this chapter, within one year of its initial organizational meeting and by February first of each succeeding year for the activities of the preceding calendar year. The report must be in writing and include recommendations as is considered appropriate by the commission to effectuate its purpose, as provided by this section.

 (3) The South Carolina‑Caribbean Island Trade Commission is authorized to raise funds, through direct solicitation or other fundraising events, alone or with other groups, and accept gifts, grants, and bequests from individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and private organizations and institutions, to defray the commission’s administrative expenses and to carry out its purposes as set forth in this chapter. The funds, gifts, grants, or bequests received pursuant to this section must be deposited in an account with the State Treasurer and allocated and annually appropriated to the Department of Commerce to defray the commission’s administrative expenses and carry out its purposes. The Department of Commerce may use funds appropriated for foreign operations to fund the administrative expenses and carry out the purposes of the commission to the extent that sufficient nonappropriated funds are not available. Foreign operations appropriations may also be used for any nonadministrative expenses of the commission with approval of the Secretary of Commerce. Expenditures made for the purposes of administering the commission and fulfilling its purposes shall be exempt from the provisions of Title 11, Chapter 35.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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