



The House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

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Paula Rawl Calhoun

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February 4, 2023

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Committees:

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The Honorable Bruce W. Bannister
SC House of Representatives
Member, House Ways and Means Committee
Post Office Box 10007
Greenville, South Carolina 29603

Dear Mr. Chairman,

RE: A Letter of Support: A Budget Request for a Conference Center in Lexington County

Please accept this letter in support of an allocation of funds (non-recurring) or from the appropriate funding source for a CONFERENCE CENTER in Lexington County which has been brought to my attention by the Mayor of Lexington. As the 6th largest county in the state, Lexington continues to expand in growth with new people. With local finances stretched in infrastructure, a state allocation for this project would be greatly appreciated. Please be informed that the request is for \$24M.

A NEW conference center in Lexington will be a one of a kind for South Carolina. Where else is there a conference center on fresh water? It's location on beautiful Lake Murray will have a potential economic impact of \$200 million dollars annually with hotel/restaurant to include hospitality and accommodation tax. It is also important to acknowledge that The Town of Lexington expends local dollars to support state roads in an amount of roughly \$40 M annually.

As mentioned, the Conference Center will be located on the shores of Lake Murray (near the damn), an agreeable location between North of Lake (Irmo/Chapin) and South of Lake (Lexington/Batesburg-Leesville). This conference center will be a fresh water jewel for the Capital City/Lake Murray Country Regional Tourism Board. The tourism industry is a viable source of revenue for the state.

The following points address this request for state funding during FY 2023-24 Appropriations Bill(s) consideration:

First and foremost: **A twenty year contract between Lexington County and the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center will expire;** thus, the Town of Lexington desires to move forward with a Conference Center in the Midlands;

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Second, the Town of Lexington has set aside funds for a Conference Center to include water, sewage and road up fits. Also, the Town of Lexington provides local dollars for state infrastructure projects;

Third, the Mayor informs me of a "Memorandum of Agreement" between the Town of Lexington and property owners where the Conference Center will be located. The MOA provides for five (5) acres for the Conference Center with surrounding acreage for growth ;

Fourthly, the land will be adjoined to a four lane highway, Highway 6, South Lake Drive, with easy access to I-26 and I-20 and,

This Conference Center request would benefit the area and state from the tourism industry. Also, this type of venue would enhance and draw the likes of Bass Pro Fishing Tournaments, boat shows, sailing events, etc. just to mention a couple of statewide/national programs.

Any consideration by the House Ways and Means Subcommittee would be greatly appreciated.

Should you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Paula Rawl Calhoon
SC House of Representatives
Lexington County – House District 87

cc: Mr. Daniel Boan, Chief of Staff, General Counsel
House Ways and Means Committee