



# SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

## STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

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*This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.*

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**Bill Number:** H. 5069 Introduced on January 29, 2026  
**Subject:** SC Protected Lands and Conservation Coordination Act  
**Requestor:** House Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environmental Affairs  
**RFA Analyst(s):** Tipton  
**Impact Date:** April 14, 2026

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### Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill establishes the South Carolina Protected Lands and Conservation Coordination Act to require the state's resource agencies, defined as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the SC Conservation Bank (SCCB), the Forestry Commission (Forestry), the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT), and the Office of Resilience (SCOR) to coordinate and collaborate with each other prior to entering into contracts that utilize funds appropriated or authorized by the General Assembly for land protection projects in order to reach the stated long-range goal of 7,000,000 acres of protected land in the state by 2050. The agencies must meet quarterly to coordinate land conservation efforts and must submit to the Executive Budget Office (EBO) within the Department of Administration (Admin) certification of compliance with the bill. The bill then requires EBO to provide an annual report to the General Assembly with certain information on land conservation projects undertaken by the resource agencies. The bill further requires the land protection projects to comply with the approval requirements of the Joint Bond Review Committee (JBRC) and the State Fiscal Accountability Authority (SFAA) and also includes a severability clause in the event that any portion is held to be unconstitutional or invalid.

This bill codifies Proviso 117.164 of the FY 2025-26 General Appropriations Act, which currently requires coordination and collaboration efforts among the resource agencies, quarterly meetings, and reporting requirements to EBO and the General Assembly on land conservation projects. Therefore, EBO within Admin, SCCB, SCOR, and PRT indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact related to agency operations. Similarly, the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) anticipates that this bill will have no operational expenditure impact on DNR or the Forestry Commission. SCCB indicates that the bill's stated goal of achieving 7,000,000 acres of protected land by 2050 will require additional funding and expenditures by the resource agencies. However, as the bill does not establish a legal requirement, mandate, or entitlement to land conservation funds, the impact will depend on the amount of future funds available and is currently undetermined.

## **Explanation of Fiscal Impact**

**Introduced on January 29, 2026**

### **State Expenditure**

This bill establishes the South Carolina Protected Lands and Conservation Coordination Act to provide for coordination between the state's resource agencies on the use of land conservation funds in order to reach the bill's stated long-range goal of 7,000,000 acres of land protected through conservation easements, public ownership, and other legally enforceable mechanisms by 2050. The bill states that this benchmark is intended solely for the purposes of long-term planning performance management, and evaluation of conservation trends and expressly states that this does not create a legal requirement, mandate, or entitlement. The bill also states that nothing may be construed to authorize the regulation of private property beyond statutory authority, require the private acquisition of land, or diminish private property rights. The bill defines state resource agencies as DNR, SCCB, Forestry, PRT, and SCOR, and requires these agencies to coordinate and collaborate with each other prior to entering into contracts that utilize funds appropriated or authorized by the General Assembly for land protection projects. The bill requires the resource agencies to ensure that the funds are used for land protection projects that support the agency's statutory objectives and to ensure that the projects demonstrate a satisfactory degree of financial leverage, partnerships, and other indicators of quality as determined by the resource agencies.

The resource agencies are also required to meet quarterly to coordinate and plan future land conservation initiatives in accordance with the bill and must certify to EBO in conjunction with their annual budget request that requests for land protection projects comply with the requirements of the bill. Copies of this certification must be provided to the Chairmen of the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees. The bill further requires EBO, no later than August fifteenth of each year to provide a report to the General Assembly that identifies land protection projects acquired during the prior fiscal year, funding sources, any reduction in the state's basis in the property, and the resource agency responsible for the long-term management of the project. The bill states that land protection projects must comply with the approval requirements of the JBRC and SFAA. The bill also includes a severability clause in the event that any portion is held to be unconstitutional or invalid.

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**State Revenue**

N/A

**Local Expenditure**

N/A

**Local Revenue**

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director