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Department of Environmental
Services**



Water is Everything to SC

Timing is Perfect

DHEC Restructuring

- 2024 restructuring brought together water planning and water permitting under SCDES
- Holistic strategy
 - regulatory and non-regulatory actions.



Legislative Surface Water Study Committee

- Established by Proviso 117.184 effective July 1, 2024
- Report to General Assembly by March 1, 2025
- Changed scope to include groundwater
- Extended deadline to March 2, 2026





*South Carolina has been richly blessed with abundant water resources, but with increased demand driven by historic economic development and a booming population, **we must take action now** to ensure these resources are managed in the best interests of all South Carolinians.”*

Governor Henry McMaster

The Charge for WaterSC

Executive Order No. 2024-22

- Balance the State's ***economic, environmental, and social needs***;
- Ensure the ***reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and sufficiency*** of the State's water resources ***for all existing and future uses***, while simultaneously ***protecting the environment***; and
- Support and facilitate additional ***collaboration*** with ongoing efforts and existing initiatives.



Deliverables and Deadlines for WaterSC

Executive Order No. 2024-22

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

October 31, 2024

Report to Surface Water Study Committee

January 31, 2025

Advise on updated State Water Plan

December 31, 2025

waterSC

Guiding Principles

- "Water is a *shared resource* with *shared responsibility*"
- A *collaborative approach* to develop and implement a *science-based actionable plan*
- A plan that *balances economic, environmental and community needs*
- A plan that secures *reliable and resilient* water resources for the *future*



“In this room, we speak first for the resource, next for our state and then for the sector we represent.”

Charles Wingard

Connecting and Collaboration: Developing the State Water Plan

SCDES



SC DEPARTMENT of
**ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**

**River
Basin
Councils**



WaterSC



Public



Building off of the 2004 Water Plan



- Establish River Basin Advisory Councils



- Comprehensive monitoring of water use



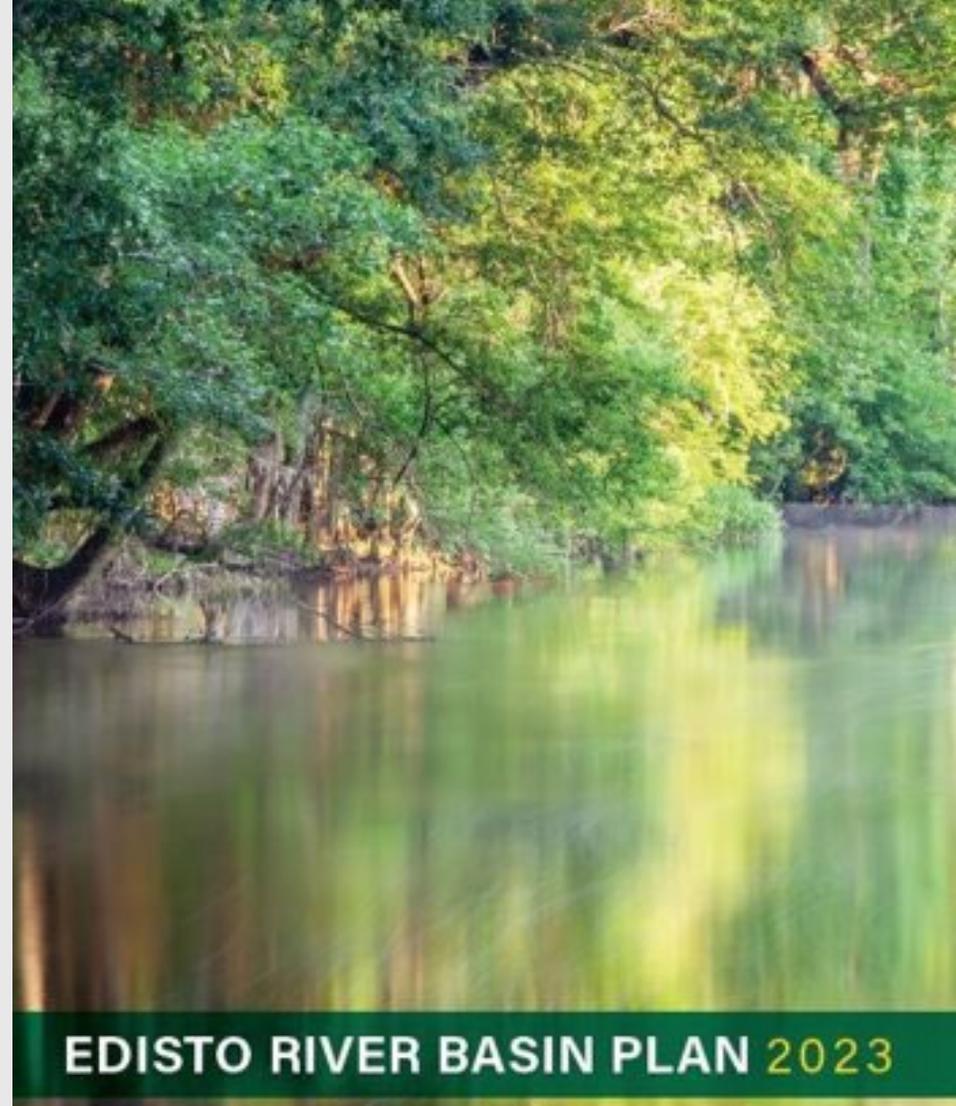
- Capacity Use Areas for the entire coastal plain



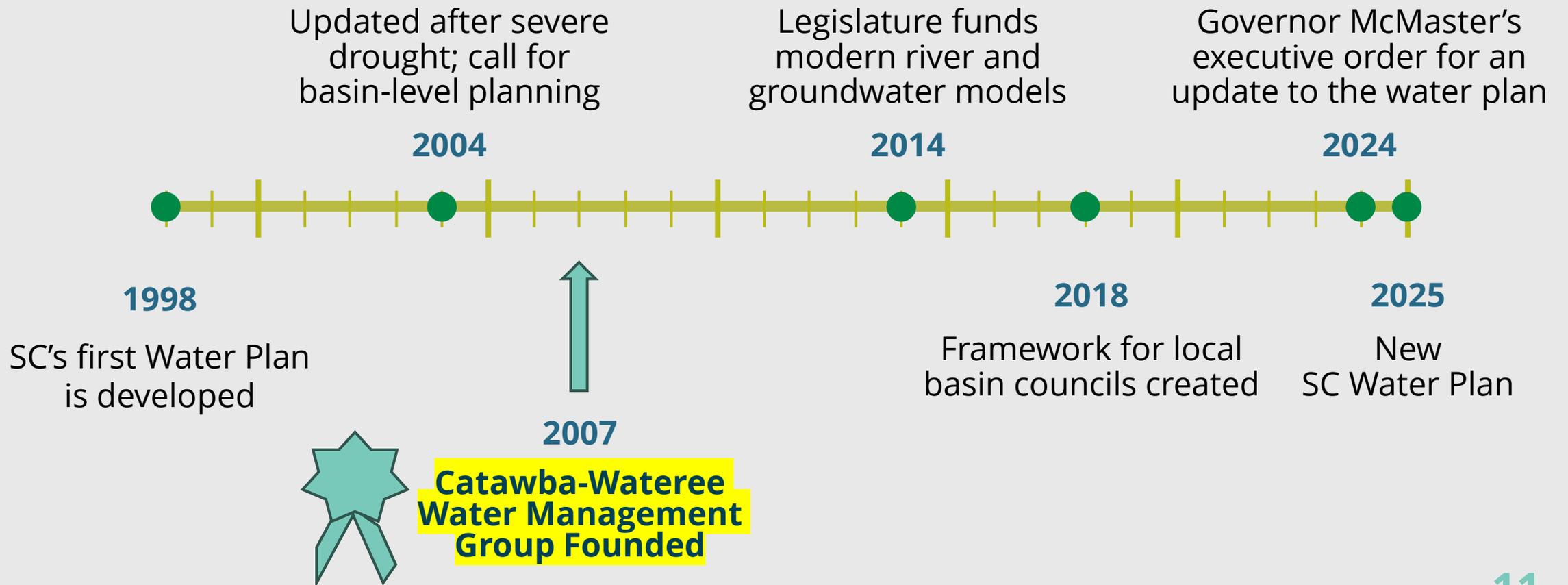
- Comprehensive groundwater flow model of the coastal plain



- Groundwater potentiometric maps of each aquifer updated every 5 years to identify areas where over pumping is occurring.



Water Planning Timeline





Presenting the Updated State Water Plan

December 2025

*Do we have enough water?
Yes, South Carolina has the water it
needs to support its people and
economy for decades to come.*

*Water is plentiful. But it is not
limitless. Smart management today
protects our prosperity tomorrow.*





Shared Recommendations across River Basins

- Strengthen planning process
- Integrate water quality
- Data collection
- Improve drought readiness
- Update laws and policies
- Education as a core strategy

WaterSC Recommendations

- Ensure on-going water planning
- Coordinate with neighboring states
- Establishing statewide water education
- Strengthen drought response systems
- Support beneficial water reuse
- Connect water quality and water quantity
- Review water permitting





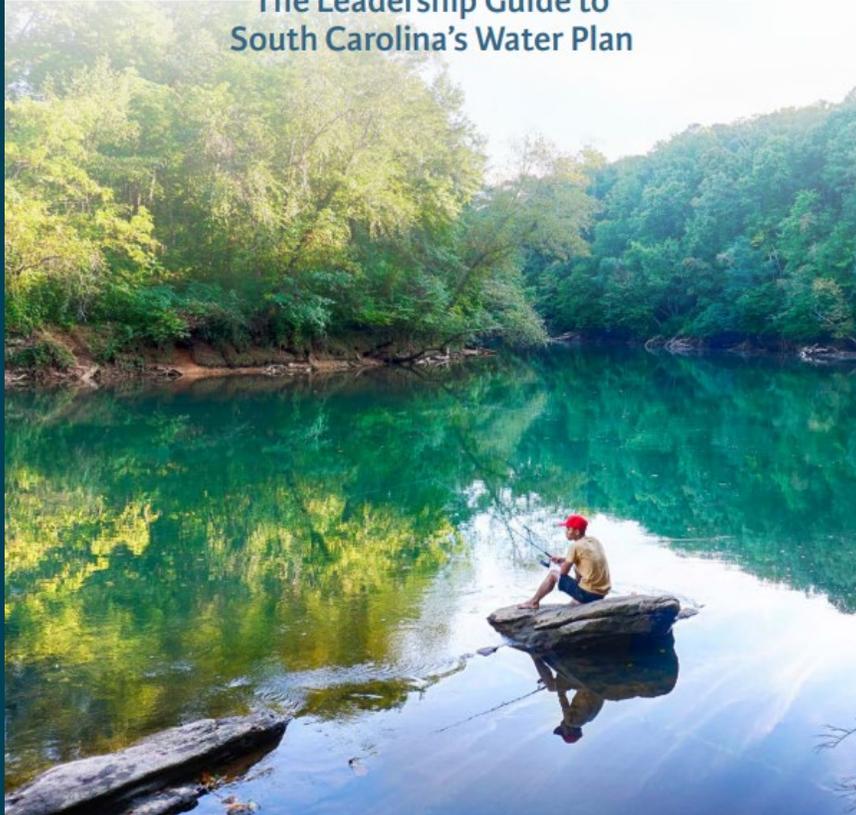
SCDES Recommendations & Priorities

- Continuous water planning
- A broad education and outreach strategy
- A more modern planning framework
 - Integrate management of groundwater and surface water
 - Prioritize beneficial water reuse
 - Response to droughts, floods & demands
- Work across state lines
- Enhanced data and modeling
- Connect water quality and water quantity
- Sustainable funding



Our Water Future

The Leadership Guide to
South Carolina's Water Plan



2025 SOUTH CAROLINA STATE WATER PLAN

THIRD EDITION



Legislative Water Study Committee

1. Given that interstate transfer conflicts are likely to arise in the near future, the SC Attorney General's office needs to be well-informed and proactive in pursuing water rights for South Carolinians.
2. With the support of current research suggesting that water recycling options in industrial applications provide sustainability benefits, South Carolina should lean into these options to maximize economic, agricultural, and conservation values of the state's water.
3. South Carolina is a state that is continuing growth daily. The Department of Environmental Services is tasked to review and update the State Water Plan. DES should continue to make changes within their authority to the State Water Plan.
4. The Department of Environmental Services needs to continue to gauge water quality and water quantity, and if issues arise, report to the Chairman of the Senate and House Agriculture Committee with a recommendation of what can be done.
5. The Department of Environmental Services is to review other states' models, with regards to new technologies, and make necessary changes. If statutory changes need to be made, the department will contact the Chairman of the Senate and House Agriculture Committee with a recommendation of what can be done.



The Model for RBCs

- How can we learn together from your experiences



INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES PLAN

Practical Solutions for a Sustainable Future

Familiar Themes with the State Water Plan

- Incorporating Water Quantity & Quality
- Leverage Funding, Public-Private Partnerships
- Water Ambassadors (Outreach)
- IBTs
- Water Reuse
- Drought Planning & Response

WaterSC 2026

From Plan to Action

Increase Interstate
Coordination with
North Carolina
and Georgia

Develop Education
and Outreach
Strategies

Enhance Data
Collection and
Update Modeling

Incorporate Water
Quality

*Define the
structure &
roles of
WaterSC 2026 &
RBCs*

*Connect RBCs
and WaterSC
2026*

*Establish
working groups
& pilots*

💧💧💧 **SAVE THE DATE** 💧💧💧



SCDES WaterSummit

Join South Carolina's foremost water experts for a day of collaboration and connection centered on protecting and preserving the state's water resources for the benefit of all, for generations to come.



SC DEPARTMENT of
**ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**

May 19, 2026
9 AM - 4 PM

**Columbia Metro
Convention Center**

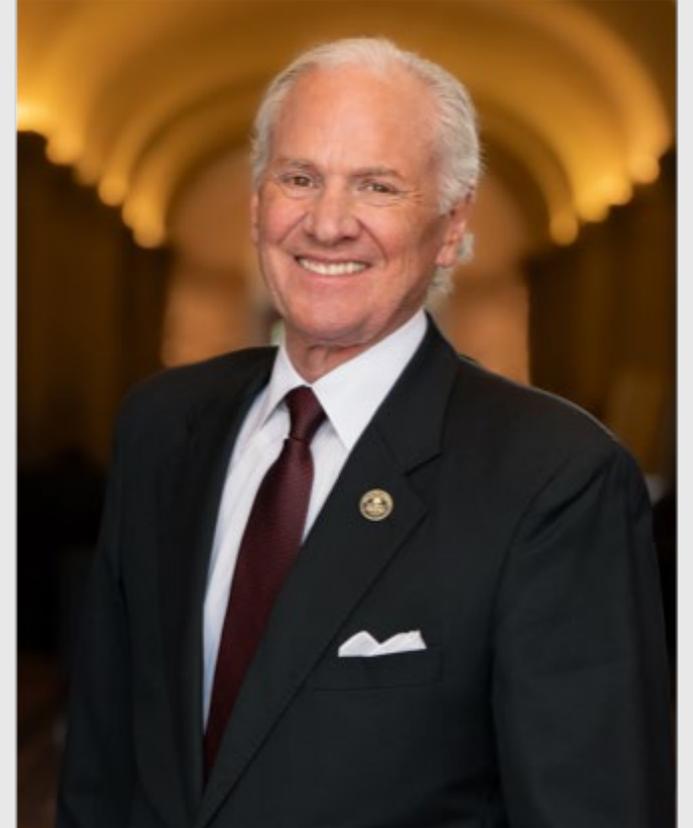
Strengthening Connections with Georgia

Environmental Council
of States Spring
Meeting

March 30, 2026



*Georgia Governor &
Featured Speaker Brian Kemp*



*South Carolina Governor &
Featured Speaker Henry
McMaster*



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