State of South Carolina
Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

June 18, 2012

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Statehouse, Second Floor
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Mr. Speaker and Members of the House,

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval R296, H.4082, a bill that earmarks 2.25 percent of insurance premium tax receipts for the Forestry Commission's firefighting efforts and for the replacement of associated equipment. These resources would be diverted from the General Fund from 2013 until 2017.

As was the case this year, my Executive Budget will always focus on the core functions of government. I have supported and will continue to support the Forestry Commission's firefighting efforts, as evidenced by my Executive Budget's recommendation that we provide millions in additional support for firefighting staff and equipment.

Given the significant additional support that the Forestry Commission is receiving in both the current and the upcoming year's budget, **I am reluctant to go above and beyond this by supporting an additional earmark of insurance premium tax receipts. I am additionally wary of dedicating General Fund revenues to specific uses, since this practice commits us to spending patterns that limit our ability to respond to revenue shortfalls and recessions.**

I will continue to fight for our firefighters to have the equipment and resources that they need, but I believe that we should take a fresh look at how we prioritize and fund our essential services each year. I have vetoed this bill because those decisions should not be on autopilot.

My very best,

Nikki R. Haley