



HENRY DARGAN McMASTER  
GOVERNOR

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander  
President of the South Carolina Senate  
State House, Second Floor  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval R-91, S. 623, which seeks to “exempt” Georgetown County “from building requirements for properties within, or affected by, the limit of moderate wave action line as shown on the May 9, 2023, flood insurance rate map” and to allow Georgetown County to “enforce AE standards as set forth in Georgetown County’s Flood Damage Prevention ordinance and the current state building code.”

The South Carolina Constitution requires that “[t]he General Assembly shall forthwith enact general laws . . . which shall be uniform in their operations.” S.C. Const. art. III, § 34. Indeed, the state constitution generally prohibits the adoption of legislation “for a specific county” and “where a general law can be made applicable.” S.C. Const. art. VIII, § 7; S.C. Const. art. III, § 34(IX). These constitutional provisions seek “to make uniform where possible the statutory laws of this State in order to avoid duplicative or conflicting laws on the same subject,” *Med. Soc. of S.C. v. Med. Univ. of S.C.*, 334 S.C. 270, 279, 513 S.E.2d 352, 357 (1999), and to prevent “legislation by delegation,” which the South Carolina Supreme Court has called “pernicious,” *Duke Power Co. v. S.C. Pub. Serv. Comm’n*, 284 S.C. 81, 90, 326 S.E.2d 395, 400 (1985).

Against this backdrop, S. 623 is special legislation: It applies only to Georgetown County. Although I am aware of disagreement over federal flood maps and appreciate the concerns about the potential impacts associated with the maps, special legislation is not a constitutionally permissible method to resolve that disagreement. There are judicial avenues available for review of this issue that can be utilized. In fact, it is my understanding that Georgetown County is currently utilizing such an avenue. See *Georgetown Cnty. v. S.C. Dep’t of Labor, Licensing & Reg.*, No. 234-ALJ-11-346-AP (S.C. A.L.C.). Based on a review of the Administrative Law Court’s docket, on May 12, 2025, two days after the General Assembly adopted S. 623, the

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Administrative Law Judge issued an order vacating an earlier decision and noting that the court would "schedule oral argument in this matter forthwith after consultation with the parties." Order 5, No. 234-ALJ-11-346-AP (S.C. A.L.C. May 12, 2025).

For the foregoing reasons, I am respectfully vetoing R-91, S. 623 and returning the same without my signature.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry Dargan McMaster", written over a horizontal line.

Henry Dargan McMaster

HDM/tal