

SC Department of Environmental Services

**FY 26 Budget Request
House Ways & Means
Constitutional Subcommittee
February 4, 2025**





Agency Attendees

- Myra Reece - *Interim Director*
- Chris Wimberly – *Chief Financial Officer*
- Rupi Grewal - *Chief External Affairs Officer*
- Environmental Program Leaders:
 - Rhonda Thompson – *Chief, Air Quality*
 - Juli Blalock – *Chief, Land & Waste Management*
 - Ann Clark – *Chief, Water*
 - Chris Stout – *Chief, Coastal Management*
 - Travis Fuss – *Chief, Regional & Lab Services*

Who We Are (Organizationally)



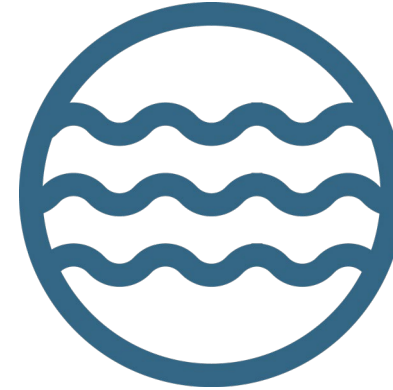
Bureau of
Air Quality



Bureau of Land
and Waste
Management



Bureau of
Coastal
Management



Bureau of
Water
(Water Planning &
Aquatic Nuisance)




Bureau of
Regional and
Laboratory
Services

Essential Support Services Teams

Who We Are

- More than engineers, scientists, & inspectors
 - Collaborators, educators, & public servants
- Our work touches the lives, health & prosperity of South Carolinians every day
- Not a 9-5 for us – it's a passion, a calling.....SC is more than a state, its our home




We are dedicated to

SERVICE

acting on behalf of our environment for the benefit of all South Carolinians. We never shy away from the hard work. We're out in the field, rolling up our sleeves and working hand-in-hand with our local communities and businesses as collaborators, partners and educators, all to protect the integrity and well-being of our shared home.

“
I believe in exemplary service. At SCDES, we're here to provide exceptional service to the people of South Carolina.”
- Mihir Mehta



Our Values & Our Culture

- Transparency & Accountability
 - Focus on fiscal responsibility and efficiency
- Customer Service
- Compliance Assistance
- Community Engagement
- Continuous Improvement
- Collaborative Partnerships & Problem Solving





SC DEPARTMENT of
**ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**

Priorities

Air: Energy

Land: Recycling

Coastal: Everything

Water: WaterSC

Regions: Reinvestment

Science • Service • Sustainability



Why Our Services Are Important to SC

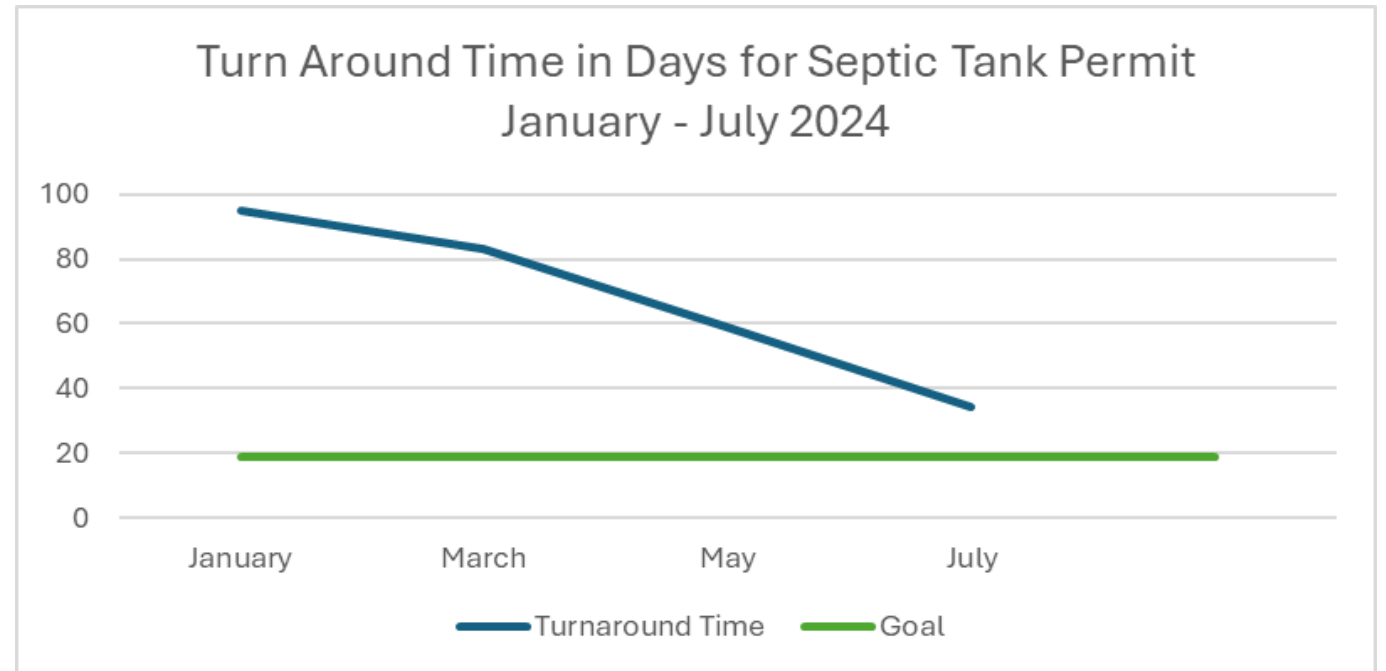
- SC is growing—Businesses & people want to make SC home
 - A healthy economy and healthy environment go "hand in hand"
 - "Responsible economic development and respect for our state's environment are not mutually exclusive" (Gov McMaster)
- Permit approval times are key to meeting many of the state's priorities and demands for services
 - Economic competitiveness/projects
 - Infrastructure investments
 - DOT/SPA projects
 - Energy Reform
- Federal commitment to permit reform—opportunity for SC



Permitting - #1 Priority

- “Deep dive” – ALL permitting programs (Lean/Six Sigma)
- Basis for budget request and informs where/how to invest resources for max results
- Permit Central Workshops
 - Permitting process - partnership
 - State/local/federal partners

Results – Septic Tanks






- Permit times reduced 75%



FY26 Budget Request

12 Requests for Recurring State Funds of \$22,513,282
2 Requests for Non-Recurring State Funds of \$5,207,132

	Improving Permitting Timeframes	\$13.7 M	(Recurring)
	Enhancing Delivery of Business Services	\$5.8 M	(Recurring)
	Hazardous Waste Cleanup	\$2.5 M	(Recurring)
	Additional Requests for Food Waste and Fish Advisory Program	\$401,935 \$5,207,132	(Recurring) (Non-Recurring)

\$3.7M Federal Authorization Increase



Improving Permitting Timeframes

Request: \$13,727,319 Recurring Funds | 20 new FTEs | 42.85 FTE Conversions

CRITICAL NEED: SC's booming economy and population growth has exceeded the Agency's capacity to issue timely permits. Additional funding is needed to ensure adequate Agency staffing, a reduction in permit timeframes and continued economic competitiveness.

Solutions:

- 1. Staffing:** Retain & Train Experienced Staff; Hire Additional Staff
- 2. IT Modernization:** Staffing to support Permit IT modernizations.



Impact of not Receiving Funding: Permit timeframes will **increase** and impact SC's economic competitiveness.

	Amount	New FTE	FTE Conv
Improving Permitting Timeframes	\$13.7 M	20	42.85
	Recurring		
*Retaining Experienced & Credentialed Workforce	\$6,904,956	-	29
Implementing and Modernizing SCDES IT Applications	\$1,590,408	8	-
*Sustaining SC's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program for Environmental and Economic Success	\$1,976,464	7	8.35
*Sustaining SC's MINING and Reclamation Program for Environmental and Economic Success	\$641,093	2	3.30
*Sustaining SC's Air Quality Program for Environmental and Economic Success	\$2,267,756	2	-
*Maintaining SC's Asbestos Program	\$346,642	1	2.20

- **Staff Retention:** Includes 29 conversions; training; salary adjustments
- **Modernizing IT Applications:** ePermitting super-users, enhancements
- **Governor McMaster** – included \$13.7M in the executive budget (90 day)



Improving Permitting Timeframes

NOTE: FY 26 Request Does Not Include Resources Needed If Energy Reform Bill Passes with Specific Permitting Timeframes



- **Strategy for Energy Infrastructure Project Permitting:**
 - **Dedicated Power Team**
 - **Pre-Application Meetings would be needed**
 - **Will submit a FIS (Fiscal Impact Statement)**



Enhancing Delivery of Business Services

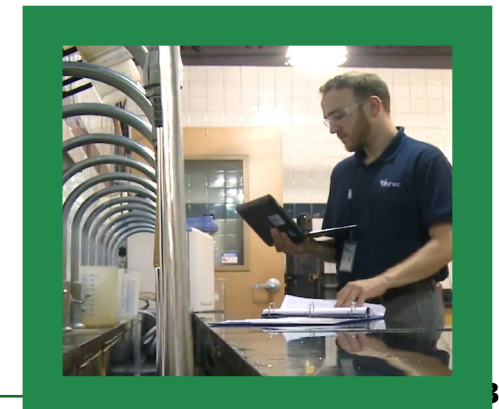
Request: \$5,884,028 Recurring Funds | 8 new FTEs | 42.85 FTE Conversions

Needs:

- **DRINKING WATER PROGRAM:** Sustainable funding is needed for DES to continue current level of compliance monitoring for public water systems beyond FY27.
- **COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE:** New funding needed to provide requested compliance assistance services to all businesses (goal: avoidance of violations, access to experts who can identify compliance risks).
- **ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM:** Sustainable funding is needed for DES to continue certifying private laboratories that submit compliance data to the Agency. A requirement of SDWA.

Impacts if funding not received:

- **Drinking Water & Lab Certification Programs:** Loss of primacy/delegation to SC for implementing and enforcing federal requirements under the SDWA
- **Compliance Assistance:** Businesses at greater risk of non-compliance resulting in higher penalties & disruptions of on-going operations.



Amount

New FTE

**FTE
Conv**

Enhance Delivery of Business Services

\$5.8 M
Recurring

8

26.02

*Sustaining SC's **DRINKING WATER** Program for Environmental and Economic Success

\$4,485,442

1

23.36

*Enhancing Compliance Assistance

\$1,104,685

7

-

*Sustaining SC's **LABORATORY CERTIFICATION** Program to Maintain Delegation

\$293,901

-

2.66



Request: \$2,500,000 Recurring Funds

Need: Funding to address existing hazardous waste sites and assist response efforts.

If Received:

- Allows SCDES to initiate investigations at 10-15 existing sites per year, while also responding immediately to new sites (\$150k-\$200k avg. per site).
- Reduces the number of known hazardous waste sites in South Carolina (backlog: more than 200 known sites).
- Enhances ability for site clean-up for property redevelopment and greenspace preservation.

Hazardous Waste Clean-up

\$2,500,000

*Sustainable Funding for the **Clean-up of Uncontrolled Hazardous Waste Sites**

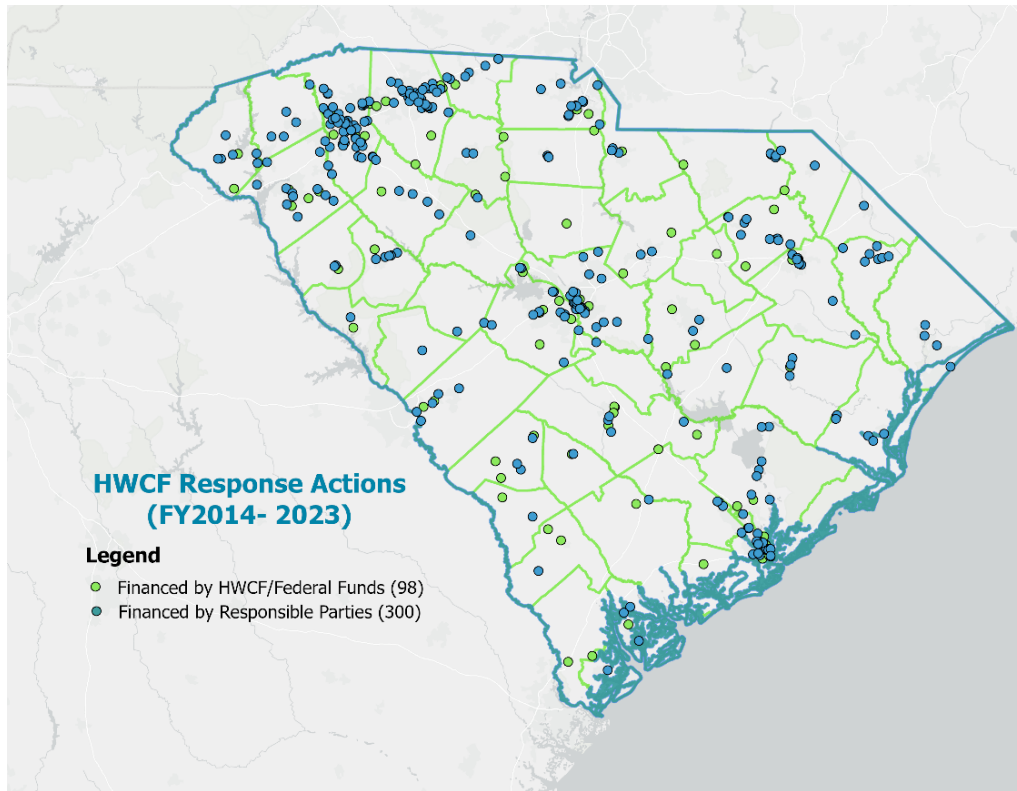
\$2,500,000

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Known sites needing assessment and clean-up.



Commerce Drive area near Rosewood Drive in Columbia, allowing for commercial development.



Food Waste and Fish Advisory Programs

Request: \$401,935 Recurring Funds | \$5,207,132 Non-recurring Funds | 3 New FTEs

Fish Consumption Advisory Program

Need: SCDES cannot adequately evaluate and communicate health risks of eating contaminated fish, especially to high-risk groups like pregnant women, children, and citizens who rely heavily on fish for their diet.

If funding is not received: Citizens will not have necessary information to help reduce their exposure to contaminants (mercury, PCBs) & limit their consumption of fish that are nutritious and safe to eat.

Food Waste Grant Program

Need: Food waste is the largest portion of materials disposed in our landfills. As population continues to grow, it is critical to enhance recycling strategies.

If funding is not received:

- Increasing solid waste will exceed current landfill capacity and local government infrastructure.
- Lost opportunities and cost savings for agribusinesses (replacement for fertilizer- safer and cheaper).

	Amount	New FTE	FTE Conv
Additional Requests	\$401,935	3	-
	\$5,207,132 (non-recurring)		
*Recover and Rebuild SC's Fish Advisory Program	\$401,935	3	-
Supporting Local Solutions for Managing Food Waste - Non-recurring	{\$5,000,000}	-	-
Recover and Rebuild SC's Fish Advisory Program - Non-recurring	{\$207,132}	-	-

Earned Authorization Request: \$3,750,000

- Additional earned funds authority needed to fully utilize earned funds for the two programs previously with DNR: Aquatic Nuisance Species Program and Water Planning Programs.

Questions?

Myra Reece // *Interim Director*

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des.sc.gov



SC Department of Environmental Services (SCDES)



SFY26 Budget Request Summary *previous request | {} non-recurring funding request | () earned authority

Priority Order	Request Title	Amount	New FTE	FTE Conv
Improving Permitting Timeframes		\$13.7 M	20	42.85
1	*Retaining Experienced & Credentialed Workforce	\$6,904,956	-	29
2	Implementing and Modernizing SCDES IT Applications	\$1,590,408	8	-
3	*Sustaining SC's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program for Environmental and Economic Success	\$1,976,464	7	8.35
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11	*Maintaining SC's Asbestos Program	\$346,642	1	2.20
Enhance Delivery of Business Services		\$5.8 M	8	26.02
4	*Sustaining SC's DRINKING WATER Program for Environmental and Economic Success	\$4,485,442	1	23.36
8	*Enhancing Compliance Assistance	\$1,104,685	7	-
9	*Sustaining SC's LABORATORY CERTIFICATION Program to Maintain Delegation	\$293,901	-	2.66
Hazardous Waste Clean-up		\$2,500,000	-	-
7	*Sustainable Funding for the Clean-up of Uncontrolled Hazardous Waste Sites	\$2,500,000	-	-
Additional Requests:				
10	*Recover and Rebuild SC's Fish Advisory Program	\$401,935	3	-
12	Supporting Local Solutions for Managing Food Waste - Non-recurring	{\$5,000,000}	-	-
13	Recover and Rebuild SC's Fish Advisory Program - Non-recurring	{\$207,132}	-	-
STATE REQUEST TOTALS: \$27,720,414		\$22,513,282 {\$5,207,132}	31	68.87
Earned Authorization Increase		\$3.7M		
14	Earned Authority request to support ongoing operations	(\$3,750,000 authority only)		



SCDES

By the Numbers

The **South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES)** has specific roles and responsibilities that support South Carolina’s communities and growth while preserving the state’s air, land, water, and coastal resources. *SCDES is a dedicated team of environmental experts whose work impacts every South Carolinian, every day.*

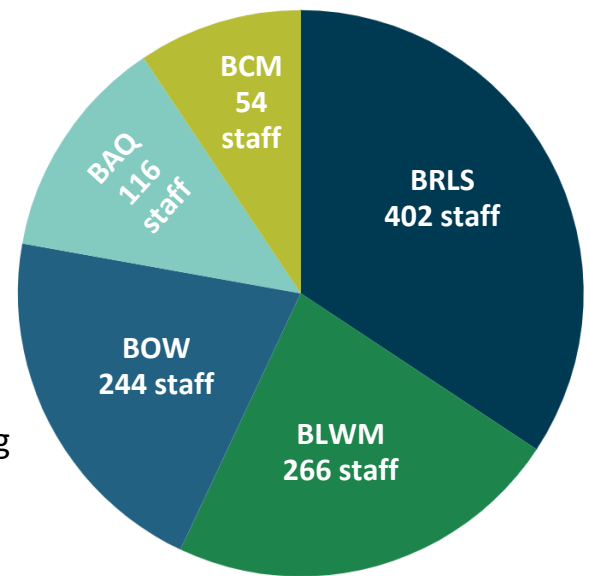
Operations

SCDES has 13 offices where regional teams assist with local environmental matters. The agency is headquartered at 2600 Bull Street in Columbia.

SCDES is comprised of *five environmental bureaus:*

Air Quality (BAQ), Water (BOW), Regional and Laboratory Services (BRLS), Land and Waste Management (BLWM), and Coastal Management (BCM).

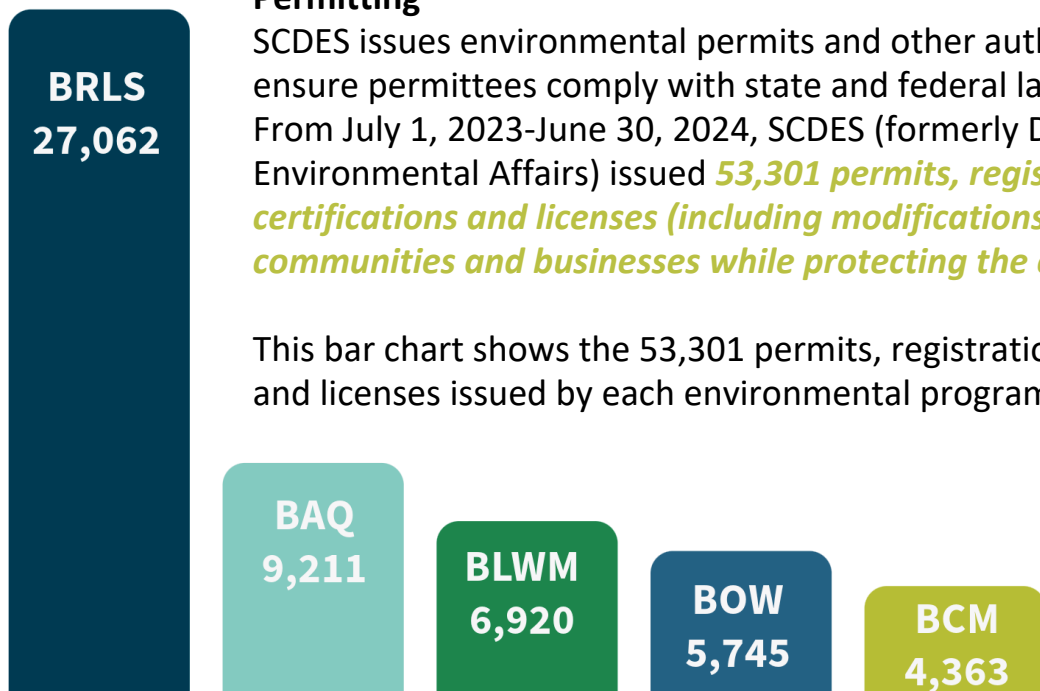
These bureaus are assisted by key support teams, including Human Resources, Finance and Operations, Technology, Communications, Constituent Services and more.



Permitting

SCDES issues environmental permits and other authorizations that ensure permittees comply with state and federal laws and regulations. From July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024, SCDES (formerly DHEC Environmental Affairs) issued *53,301 permits, registrations, certifications and licenses (including modifications) to support communities and businesses while protecting the environment.*

This bar chart shows the 53,301 permits, registrations, certifications, and licenses issued by each environmental program.





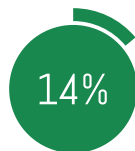
Personnel

SCDES employs 1,200 public servants, including *scientists, engineers, chemists, biologists, geologists, hydrogeologists, meteorologists, risk assessors, permit writers, inspectors, health physicists, and quality assurance staff*. Science and data drive the agency's abilities to preserve and protect the environment, which is why the agency maintains a *highly specialized workforce*.



700 (74%) program staff have science backgrounds

937 (85%) SCDES positions have a higher education minimum requirement



149 (14%) SCDES employees have a professional license

Environmental Emergency Response

SCDES helps *protect people and the environment during natural disasters, hazardous releases, and other incidents*. The agency has trained emergency response personnel who are experts in their field and coordinate response efforts with local, state and federal officials.

SCDES maintains a *24-hour Environmental Emergency Response Line* for anyone to report chemical releases, oil spills, fish kills, or other environmental concerns.

From July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, SCDES responded to **3,103 calls** to its 24-hour Environmental Emergency Response line.

SCDES is part of the *State Emergency Response Team* and the *Hurricane Task Force*. Throughout the year, SCDES staff participate in workshops, drills, exercises, and plan reviews related to the State's Emergency Operation Plan to ensure optimal training and readiness.

SCDES Hurricane Helene Storm Response Overview, September 2024

- Staff worked 24-hour shifts to prepare and respond to storm impacts.
- Proactively notified dam owners to monitor water levels and clear spillways.
- Maintained communications with drinking water and wastewater facilities.
- Performed pre-storm and post-storm assessments at 400 regulated dams.
- Activated emergency debris disposal sites in 21 counties.
- Conducted beachfront storm damage assessments.
- Activated the Private Drinking Well Water Hotline for residents.