**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO CENSURE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CHAIRMAN CAROLINE RHODES FOR PROVIDING FALSE TESTIMONY TO THE FISH, GAME AND FORESTRY COMMITTEE, TO CENSURE CHAIRMAN RHODES FOR OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT IN OFFICE AND FOR ABUSES OF POWER WHILE IN OFFICE, TO DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNOR REMOVE CHAIRMAN RHODES FROM OFFICE, AND TO REFER THE MATTER TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO DETERMINE IF PROSECUTION IS WARRANTED.

Whereas, Section 54‑6‑10 of the 1976 Code requires the Department of Natural Resources to provide professional staff assistance to the Savannah River Maritime Commission upon the request of the commission; and

Whereas, the Savannah River Maritime Commission has requested and relied upon the department’s professional staff from the commission’s inception; and

Whereas, the department’s professional staff has been indispensible to the commission’s ongoing consideration of the impact that the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project will have on South Carolina; and

Whereas, on February 1, 2012, Mrs. Caroline Rhodes, Chairman of the Department of Natural Resources Board, testified under oath before the Senate Fish, Game and Forestry Committee concerning allegations of wrongdoing by the board related to the retirement of the department’s director, Mr. John Frampton; and

Whereas, during her testimony, Chairman Rhodes was asked whether she mandated that departmental staff abstain from participating in all matters related to the Savannah River dredging project; and

Whereas, Chairman Rhodes testified that she made no such mandate; and

Whereas, on December 7, 2011, in an e‑mail to department staff, Director John Frampton relayed Chairman Rhodes’ mandate prohibiting the department’s staff from attending the Savannah River Maritime Commission meeting on December 9, 2011; and

Whereas, the Senate further finds that the mandate by Chairman Caroline Rhodes to ignore plain and unambiguous statutory requirements was an abuse of power and that providing false testimony to the Fish, Game and Forestry Committee constitutes official misconduct in office. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the Senate, by this resolution, hereby censure Department of Natural Resources Board Chairman Caroline Rhodes for providing false testimony to the Fish, Game and Forestry Committee.

Be it further resolved that the Senate, by this resolution, hereby censureChairman Caroline Rhodes for official misconduct in office and for abuses of power while in office that has brought ridicule, dishonor, shame, and disgrace to herself, the Department of Natural Resources, and the State of South Carolina.

Be it further resolved that the Senate demand that the Governor immediately remove Chairman Caroline Rhodes from office.

Be it further resolved that the record of this matter be referred to the Attorney General to determine if prosecution is warranted.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Chairman Caroline Rhodes, Attorney General Alan Wilson, and Governor Nikki Haley.

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