

Agency Name:	First Steps		
Agency Code:	H620	Section:	1



Fiscal Year FY 2022-2023

Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS <i>(FORM B1)</i>	For FY 2022-2023, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

NON-RECURRING REQUESTS <i>(FORM B2)</i>	For FY 2022-2023, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

CAPITAL REQUESTS <i>(FORM C)</i>	For FY 2022-2023, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

PROVISOS <i>(FORM D)</i>	For FY 2022-2023, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Mark Barnes	(803) 734-8079	mbarnes@scfirststeps.org
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Lavinia Tejada	(803) 734-2716	ltejada@scfirststeps.org

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2022-2023 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

SIGN/DATE:	Agency Director		Board or Commission Chair	
	DocuSigned by: <i>Georgia Mjartan</i>	9/16/2021	DocuSigned by: <i>David Morley</i>	9/17/2021
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	68AAE63BCD1841E...		2ADC47A47CC8491...	
	Georgia Mjartan		David Morley	

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	First Steps
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BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	READY	6,000,000	0	0	0	6,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			6,000,000	0	0	0	6,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	1
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	READY
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	<p>General: \$6,000,000</p> <p>Federal: \$0</p> <p>Other: \$0</p> <p>Total: \$6,000,000</p>
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2022-2023? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	<p>1.1.2 Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory results for children in parenting programs</p> <p>1.2.3 Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory results for adults in parenting programs</p> <p>1.2.1 Number of children served directly by Local Partnerships</p> <p>1.2.2 Number of children served directly in high intensity programs from Local Partnerships</p> <p>1.3.1 Distribution of Profile of the Ready Kindergartner – Copies Distributed</p> <p>2.2.1 Number of children in child care centers where quality enhancement and training have occurred</p> <p>2.2.2 Hours of on-site technical assistance provided to child-care centers</p> <p>3.1.1 Proportion of service targets reached</p> <p>3.1.2 Number of AmeriCorps members recruited</p>
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3.2.1 Children ready for kindergarten (KRA) total and by demographic breakdown

3.2.2 Children ready for kindergarten (KRA) total and by demographic breakdown

Funds would be awarded to SC First Steps Local Partnerships through competitive and targeted grants, based on the quality of their grant application and through identification of their infrastructure and capacity needs. This will include the proposed impact, reach, and outcomes specified. External evaluation costs are included.

What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Funds would be distributed through a competitive and targeted grant-making process approved by the South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees to First Steps Local Partnerships. Every First Steps Local Partnership meeting their requirements would be eligible to apply for the funds.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Every Child READY

Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth

First Steps local partnership programs successfully get children ready for school, however, 76% of children who qualify for these public programs cannot access them due to lack of funding to support sufficient reach. With 90% of a child's brain developing before they ever reach Kindergarten, the most important investment in education takes place in the first five years of life.

This request would increase the number of infants, toddlers and preschoolers participating in programs proven to accelerate early learning and development, improve early childhood health, strengthen families, building on a parent's role as their child's first and most important teacher, expand access to high-quality child-care, and support a successful start to school.

Funding would be distributed to First Steps Local Partnerships through competitive and targeted grants. Grant awards would prioritize programs for children birth through age three, rural communities, and communities where Kindergarten Readiness scores are consistently below the state average. This structure ensures fund deployment has the greatest impact, drives measurable outcomes, meets the greatest need, incentivizes innovation, and leverages additional, non-state funds. By supporting and expanding the most effective programs and building local partnerships' capacity, staffing, and infrastructure, the recurring allocation of **Resources for Early Acceleration and Development in Youth** will realize South Carolina's promise to future generations – a state where Every Child is Ready.

Research proves that First Steps Local Partnership services are closing the gap for children in poverty. Compared to their peers, children who participated in First Steps programs were 74% more likely to score at the highest level on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and 34% less likely to be chronically absent in kindergarten. Monitoring and evaluation of this investment is included in this request to ensure the continued achievement of measurable progress toward early childhood health, education, and developmental goals. No more than 5% of funds will be retained by South Carolina First Steps for monitoring, evaluation, and program support.

Without additional funds for local partnership programs, the early childhood population-level impact of First Steps will remain limited. South Carolina will miss out on federal and private funds requiring match that could be drawn down with these dollars. Without additional support for capacity, infrastructure and staffing at the local partnership level, smaller, rural partnerships will not be able to fully tap into existing opportunities to deploy non-state funds to serve young children and their families.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

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FORM D – PROVISO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER	1.55 1A.29
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Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark "NEW").

TITLE	SDE EIA: Full Day 4K
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Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.

BUDGET PROGRAM	Sec. 1, VIII. Education Improvement Act, I. First Steps to School Readiness, Sec. 1, XIII. First Steps to School Readiness
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Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.

RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	No
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Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2022-2023? If so, cite it here.

REQUESTED ACTION	Amend
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Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	State Department of Education
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Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?

SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	<p>Proviso spells out the requirements and allowances for the 4K Program (CERDEP) for both SC First Steps and the Department of Education. It establishes the rates of pay for districts and private providers, allows Military Child Care Centers to participate, allows new private providers to apply for up to \$30,000 in one-time supplemental funds to bring themselves into compliance with licensing regulations, materials and staffing so they can provide 4K for children in underserved areas. It sets an amount to be submitted to the EOC for an annual evaluation of the program. It allows for an increase in the rates for high quality centers and provides grants to help centers open 4K classrooms in underserved areas. It establishes an option for an extended day and year based on available funding and reporting requirements.</p> <p>We are requesting an increase of \$270 in the annual tuition rate of a child, based on the inflation rate of 5.6%. This will help address the rising costs of staffing and supplies. In addition, an increase of 32.88 is requested, bringing the total of \$619.88 for transportation per child. We are requesting an increase of \$400 per child in classroom grants for set up, and an increase of \$4,000 for a classroom of 7 or more. We are also requesting deletion of the pilot project for public private partnerships as the need for this has been met.</p>
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Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

FISCAL IMPACT

There would be an increase in cost with this proviso that would be paid for with current funds. We project 4,650 in total students once statewide expansion is complete with a total of 388 classrooms. The total cost of the \$270 increase, based on the 5.6% inflation factor, would be \$1,255,500 for SC First Steps. We currently pay transportation for 71 enrolled children which is 3.3% of eligible students. Once we reach full statewide expansion the inflation increases in cost of 5.6% for transportation of \$33 per child will be a total of \$5,016. Currently we have 295 classrooms, with the statewide expansion, we expect this number to climb to 388. The additional 93 classrooms who would need a classroom supply grant would cost an additional \$372,000 for the increase. The total cost for these increases would be \$1,632,516, which can be absorbed for the 2022-23 school year.

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

(SDE-EIA: Full-Day 4K) Beginning with the current fiscal year, eligible students residing in any school district may participate in the South Carolina Early Reading Development and Education program (CERDEP) pending the availability of space and funding. Student eligibility as defined by Section 59-156-130 of the 1976 Code is an annual family income of one hundred eighty-five percent or less of the federal poverty guidelines as promulgated annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or a statement of Medicaid eligibility.

A parent or guardian may choose to enroll their child in a public school participating in the program and approved by the Department of Education pursuant to Section 59-156-210 or in a private provider participating in the program and approved by the Office of First Steps pursuant to Section 59-156-200. A private provider includes, but is not limited to, a child care center, a military child care facility regulated by the United States Department of Defense, or a non-profit independent school. State funds appropriated for the provision of CERDEP services in military child care facilities may not be used to supplant existing federal child care funds.

Beginning with the current fiscal year, 4K programs in public schools and non-profit independent schools participating in CERDEP are not required to be approved, registered, or licensed by the Department of Social Services in order to participate in CERDEP. Instead, the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps are responsible for ensuring that providers deliver high-quality educational programs pursuant to Section 59-156-160.

Public and private providers shall be funded for instructional costs at a rate of ~~\$5,0704,800~~ per student enrolled. Eligible students enrolling during the school year or withdrawing during the school year shall be funded on a pro rata basis determined by the length of their enrollment. Private providers transporting eligible children to and from school shall also be eligible for a reimbursement of ~~\$620587~~ per eligible child transported. All providers who are reimbursed are required to retain records as required by their fiscal agent. New providers participating for the first time in the current fiscal year and enrolling between one and six eligible children shall be eligible to receive up to ~~\$1,4001000~~ per child in materials and equipment funding, with providers enrolling seven or more such children eligible for funding not to exceed ~~\$14,00010,000~~. Providers receiving equipment funding are expected to participate in the program and provide high-quality, center-based programs as defined herein for a minimum of three years. Failure to participate for three years will require the provider to return a portion of the equipment allocation at a level determined by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps to School Readiness. Funding to providers is contingent upon receipt of data as requested by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps. The Department of Education shall only provide funding for public school students whose complete records have been entered into PowerSchool based on the one hundred and thirty-five day student average daily membership. For the current fiscal year, providers may enroll pay-lunch children who score at or below the twenty-fifth national percentile on two of the three DIAL-3 subscales by July 1 if at least seventy-five percent of the total number of children eligible or the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program in a district or county are projected

**PROPOSED
PROVISO TEXT**

to be enrolled in that program, Head Start, or ABC Child Care Program as determined by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps, Child Early Reading Development and Education Program. Providers may receive reimbursement for these children if funds are available.

Annually, the Department of Education is directed to audit the annual allocations to public providers to ensure that allocations are accurate and aligned to the appropriate pro rata per student allocation, materials, and equipment funding. In the event the department, during the audit process determines that the annual allocations of the prior fiscal year are not accurate, the department must adjust the allocations for the current fiscal year to account for the audit findings. The department must provide the results of the annual audit findings to the General Assembly no later than December first. Likewise, in the event the Office of First Steps determines that the annual allocations of the prior fiscal year to private providers are not accurate, the Office of First Steps must adjust the allocations for the current fiscal year to account for the findings.

Of the funds appropriated, \$300,000 shall be allocated to the Education Oversight Committee to conduct an annual evaluation of the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program and to issue findings in a report to the General Assembly by January fifteenth of each year. To aid in this evaluation, the Education Oversight Committee shall determine the data necessary and both public and private providers are required to submit the necessary data as a condition of continued participation in and funding of the program. This data shall include developmentally appropriate measures of student progress. Additionally, the Department of Education shall issue a unique student identifier for each child receiving services from a private provider. The Department of Education shall be responsible for the collection and maintenance of data on the public state funded full day and half-day four-year-old kindergarten programs. The Office of First Steps to School Readiness shall be responsible for the collection and maintenance of data on the state funded programs provided through private providers. The Education Oversight Committee shall use this data and all other collected and maintained data necessary to conduct a research based review of the program's implementation and assessment of student success in the early elementary grades along with information, recommendations, and a timeline for how the state can increase the number of students served in high-quality programs.

For each school district that chooses not to participate in CERDEP, the district shall receive the same amount of EIA funds as allocated in the prior fiscal year for the provision of a half-day 4K program from the funds appropriated to the Department of Education for CERDEP or from any funds carried forward from the prior fiscal year to CERDEP. For eligible children residing in school districts that do not participate in CERDEP, the Department of Education is required to develop and implement inter-district transfer policies that give parents or guardians the option of their eligible child attending an out-of-district school that participates in CERDEP.

For the current fiscal year, the Office of First Steps may expend: (1) up to \$2,000,000 to pilot a program to provide higher reimbursement rates to high-quality child care centers. The reimbursement rate for students enrolled by child care providers rated B or higher in the ABC Quality System operated by the Department of Social Services may be increased by up to 10% of the per-student base following guidelines developed by the Office of First Steps; and (2) up to \$100,000 to provide one-time supplemental, needs-based incentive grants in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 for newly created and/or newly approved private providers proposing to expand service to ten or more CERDEP eligible children in communities unable to enroll all eligible students in a public, private, or Head Start setting during the prior fiscal year. These grants are designed to address building renovations, documented as necessary to bring proposed classrooms into compliance with licensing regulations, materials and staffing costs, and/or other obstacles currently preventing their participation in the program. The First Steps Board of Trustees shall develop and approve an application process that incorporates formal review and fiscal safeguards designed to ensure grant funds are used solely to address documented barriers to program participation. Providers receiving this one-time supplement shall be expected to participate in the program and provide high-quality, center-based programs as defined herein for a minimum of three years. Failure to participate for three years shall require the provider to return a portion of the supplemental allocation at a level determined by the Office of First Steps to School Readiness. First Steps shall submit a report detailing its process, expenditures and expanded enrollment to the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee by March 15; and (3) up to \$1,000,000 may be used to provide grants to public-private partnerships to address building renovations and designs necessary to get the building and classrooms into compliance with licensing regulations and other obstacles that prevent participation in CERDEP following guidelines developed by the Office of First Steps. Providers participating in this pilot shall be expected to participate in the program and provide high-quality, center-based programs as defined herein for a minimum of three years. Failure to participate for three years shall require the provider to return a portion of the supplemental allocation at a level determined by the Office of First Steps.

If by August first, the Department of Education or the Office of First Steps determines that appropriations will exceed expenditures, available funds may be used to fund an extended program and to increase the length of the program to a maximum of eight and a half hours per day or two hundred and twenty days per year or to fund summer programs. If a district chooses to fund summer enrollment, the program funding shall conform to the funding in this act for full year programs; however, it shall be reduced on a pro rata basis to conform with the length of the program. A summer program shall be no more than eight and a half hours per day and shall be not more than ten weeks in length. The per pupil allocation and classroom grant must conform with the appropriated amount contained in this act and end of year adjustments shall be based on the one hundred and thirty-five-day student average daily membership or later student average daily membership for districts choosing to extend the program past one hundred and eighty days. Funds may also be used to provide parent engagement, professional development and quality evaluations of programs. No later than April first, the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps shall report to the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee on the expenditure of these funds to include the following information: the amount of money used and specific steps and measures taken to enhance the quality of the 4K program and the amount of money used for professional development as well as the types of professional development offered and the number of participants. The Office of First Steps is directed to determine if the provision of extended programs in private centers improves the ability of parents to enter the workforce or to pursue postsecondary training or industry credentials.

On or before November 15, the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps shall share data that identifies the total number of children enrolled in CERDEP in both public and private providers. If available appropriations exceed the instructional costs of serving children enrolled in the program and if a waiting list of eligible children can be documented by the Department of Education and by the Office of First Steps, then the Executive Budget Office may authorize the transfer of funds between the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps.

The Office of First Steps and the Department of Education shall collaborate with the South Carolina Head Start State Collaboration Office to inform parents of all publicly funded full-day 4K programs including Head Start.

For Fiscal Year 2021-22, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, children who were eligible to participate in the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program in the prior fiscal year but did not participate, shall be eligible to participate in the program during Fiscal Year 2021-22, subject to classroom availability and funding.

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

Agency Name:	First Steps		
Agency Code:	H620	Section:	1

FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
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AMOUNT	\$203,110
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What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	0
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How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	<p>The total amount of a 3% General Fund Reduction would be \$203,110. The primary impact would be to our CERDEP Program, or Full Day 4K. This program provides full day funding for 4 year old kindergarten at private providers for children in low income families. The amount of impact for 4K would be \$195,281, which with full enrollment would mean a reduction of 42 children. The remaining amount would be \$7,829 and would impact the ECAC Program Manager and Data Base Administrator and some of their operating cost. This impact could be absorbed.</p>
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What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY	<p>3% of the total amount of General Funds received by the organization in SFY 2021-22 would be \$6,770,328 X .03 = \$203,110. This consists of the following:</p> <p>Classified Positions \$8,454</p> <p>Employer Contrib. \$1,930</p> <p>CDEPP Operating \$192,726</p> <p>Total \$203,110</p> <p>These majority of these funds are allocated for the CDEPP Program for children. This could reduce the number of children that are served in the program and could affect up to 42 children. Other costs could be absorbed.</p>
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Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

**AGENCY COST
SAVINGS PLANS**

The agency is constantly evaluating ways to be more efficient and provide greater benefit to the people we serve. This includes working on quality of services, and working to keep costs as low as possible, while accomplishing our mission.

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?

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FORM F – REDUCING COST AND BURDEN TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS

TITLE	SC First Steps
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

EXPECTED SAVINGS TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS	SC First Steps does not assess fines or fees associated with its services. First Steps has no regulations on businesses or members of the public.
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What is the expected savings to South Carolina's businesses and citizens that is generated by this proposal? The savings could be related to time or money.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	<p>Mark "X" for all that apply:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Repeal or revision of regulations.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Other</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeal or revision of regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeal or revision of regulations.								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other								

METHOD OF CALCULATION	N/A
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Describe the method of calculation for determining the expected cost or time savings to businesses or citizens.

REDUCTION OF FEES OR FINES	N/A
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Which fees or fines does the agency intend to reduce? What was the fine or fee revenue for the previous fiscal year? What was the associated program expenditure for the previous fiscal year? What is the enabling authority for the issuance of the fee or fine?

REDUCTION OF REGULATION	N/A
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Which regulations does the agency intend to amend or delete? What is the enabling authority for the regulation?

SUMMARY	N/A
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Provide an explanation of the proposal and its positive results on businesses or citizens. How will the request affect agency operations?