

**Statement of Calhoun County, South Carolina Regarding  
the Capital Project Sales Tax Lawsuit**

**April 10, 2019**

Calhoun County, South Carolina has issued the following statement in response to the *South Carolina Public Interest Foundation et al v. Calhoun County Council* lawsuit filed on April 3, 2019:

Like many counties in South Carolina, Calhoun County faces significant capital needs, and in order to best meet the needs of its residents, Calhoun County Council created the Calhoun County Capital Project Sales Tax Commission and charged the Commission with assessing the capital needs of the County. The Commission collaborated with community leaders and interested citizens, and consulted with legal counsel, to develop a ballot identifying the most urgent capital needs throughout our County. In addition to bricks-and-mortar projects, the Commission also identified several public safety capital projects to be funded from the sales tax, including emergency communications equipment, ambulances, and fire trucks. In including these projects, the Commission followed the example of many other South Carolina counties large and small that have financed emergency communications equipment, ambulances, and fire trucks from a Capital Project Sales Tax.

Pursuant to State law, County Council had no right to change the list of projects formulated by the Commission (and placed on the ballot), but did have the ability to ask the voters for bonding authority so that if the referendum was successful, the citizens of the County could benefit from the projects as soon as possible. By ordinance dated August 13, 2018, County Council sent the ballot question to the people of Calhoun County, who overwhelmingly approved the sales tax for the capital projects at the November 2018 general election. Given the historically low interest rate environment, the County was planning to issue bonds this summer to deliver the capital projects on an expedited basis. These efforts are now on hold due to the pending lawsuit.

The citizens of our County should expect government to abide by State law and the Capital Projects Sales Tax Act is no exception. The County took great care to ensure that it implemented the sales tax in accordance with State law and looks forward to swift judicial review of the pending suit in order for the County to get back to the business of the people and give life to the important projects the citizens of the County requested and approved last November.

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