PUBLIC SERVICE
AND AGRICULTURE

BUDGET REQUESTS 2026-2027

NATURAL RESOURCE UTILIZATION AND
PLANNING INSTITUTE (NRUPI)

RECURRING

$3,000,000

NATURAL RESOURCE UTILIZATION AND PLANNING INSTITUTE (NRUPI)

Considering South Carolina's rapid economic and population growth, a comprehensive approach to managing land and natural resources is imperative. The Natural Resource Utilization and Planning Institute (NRUPI) initiative is envisioned to tackle the multifaceted challenges of land use management, particularly urban sprawl, environmental preservation and sustainable development. Our goal is to harmonize economic growth with the protection of essential agricultural lands and unique ecosystems. NRUPI will be a critical resource, helping equip South Carolina with the tools necessary for strategic management of its agricultural lands and natural resources.

Goals

- Promote evidence-based land use and natural resource management.

- Protect agricultural land through targeted preservation efforts.

- Preserve unique ecosystems providing access to South Carolina's natural amenities.

- Strengthen community resilience against environmental hazards and climate impacts.

- Foster transparent public participation in planning processes.

- Develop educational programs, including youth development, to nurture informed stewards.

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Current State

- The agribusiness and forestry sectors generate nearly $52B in economic activity and support almost 260K jobs annually (2022). Current pressures from development and urbanization, driven by population growth, are significant.

- NRUPI would address these challenges by offering accessible real-time data that supports comprehensive policy analysis and predictive modeling.

- These data, coupled with rigorous economic and environmental assessments, will empower farmers, land managers and local communities to make informed decisions, balancing resilience with ongoing development pressures.

What will this $3M do?

- Enhance the capacity of farmers, local and state governments, and communities to make informed land-use decisions, protecting livelihoods and natural resources.

- Establish three key faculty positions on land use economics, data modeling and predictive analytics, along with a dedicated team of Extension specialists and agents.

- Create a structure that allows NRUPI to foster innovative research and outreach initiatives that directly inform policymakers at the state, regional and local levels.

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