



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

February 1, 2012

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
506 Blatt Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Mr. Speaker and Members of the House:

I am writing to let you know that today I signed H.3947, R-124, a bill removing appointment power from the Governor for the commissioners of the Richland-Lexington Airport Commission and reassigning it to the Richland County Legislative Delegation, the Lexington County Legislative Delegation, and the Columbia City Council. While I am not opposed to removing the Governor from the appointment process for regional airport commissions, I would like to encourage a uniform approach to legislating the appointment of and qualifications for these commissioners.

As I have said many times before, I believe that the best government is that closest to the people. Regional airport commissions serve local interests with little state-level involvement. Removing the Governor from the appointment process may remove an unnecessary layer of state-level involvement and streamline the process. However, these airport commissions serve an important local function, and the appointment process must include a proper evaluation of the candidates. The Governor's Office currently performs this due diligence.

The General Assembly has created several of these regional airport commissions, and it has uniformly given the Governor appointment power with respect to each of them. I do not see any rational basis to treat the Richland-Lexington Airport Commission any differently than, say, the Greenville-Spartanburg Airport Commission or the Pee Dee Regional Airport Authority. It does not seem prudent to create multiple sets of rules to govern local agencies that serve essentially the same purpose.

Therefore, I ask that you send me a bill that addresses the governing structures of regional airport commissions in a comprehensive and uniform way that includes reassigning appointment power for all of these regional airport commissions to county and city elected officials, the local legislative delegations, or some combination thereof, and ensures that candidates are properly evaluated and qualified to serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki R. Haley".

Nikki R. Haley