



UPSTATE RURAL LAND UNDER ATTACK

A South Carolina peach farm.

ISSUE BRIEF

Perhaps more than anywhere else in the state, suburban sprawl into rural and agricultural lands is plaguing Greenville County. On behalf of rural residents, landowners and citizens groups, we are working to establish sound land use policy in the Upstate.

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As population booms along the I-85 corridor, many Upstate municipalities are struggling with how to best plan for rapidly expanding residential development. **A particularly insidious strategy for development that has arisen is the rural high-density subdivision.** Under this strategy, a developer:

1. acquires a rural tract for a much cheaper price than in urban and suburban areas;
2. capitalizes on overwhelming housing demand in order to lure in residents;
3. and then leaves it for the surrounding community and local government to cope with the lack of adequate infrastructure for the new population.

Thanks to the socialization of costs, while profits are pocketed by few private hands, these rural subdivisions – like so much land speculation before – tend to spread virally, and before long, valuable rural landscapes and resources of the Upstate have been forever transformed.

In 2018, Greenville County took important and unprecedented action to curb this kind of rural development, passing an ordinance called "Article 3.1" that allows rejection of a subdivision, even in unzoned parts of the County, if the subdivision is inconsistent with surrounding density or the environment.

Not surprisingly, this ordinance has come under fierce attack from certain segments of the development community, and County resolve has wavered.

"I think Greenville County more than almost anywhere in the state has this problem of high-density subdivisions just being slapped down in these rural landscapes," said SCEL P Upstate Director Michael Corley. "We are facing this at both ends of the county, north and south."

SCEL P is committed to fighting to uphold Article 3.1 and for judicious rural land use in the Upstate. In courtrooms and in front of the Greenville Planning Commission, we have intervened on behalf of residents and citizens groups against several proposed subdivisions in some of the most rural and environmentally significant parts of the Upstate.

We will not allow Greenville County to back away from protecting rural lands, and we will continue fighting for quality of life supported by their health and stewardship.



Learn more: www.scelp.org