**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**S. 665**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senators Matthews, Hutto, Williams, Sabb, Tedder, Ott, Sutton, Devine and Walker

Companion/Similar bill(s): 4476

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Introduced in the Senate on May 7, 2025

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Labor, Commerce and Industry**

Summary: Trade commissions

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

5/7/2025 Senate Introduced and read first time ([Senate Journal‑page 7](h:\sj\20250507.docx))

5/7/2025 Senate Referred to Committee on **Labor, Commerce and Industry** ([Senate Journal‑page 7](h:\sj\20250507.docx))

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=665&session=126&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[05/07/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/665_20250507.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING CHAPTER 80 TO TITLE 39 ENTITLED “SOUTH CAROLINA‑BAHAMAS TRADE COMMISSION” SO AS TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH CAROLINA‑BAHAMAS TRADE COMMISSION AND PROVIDE FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP AND PURPOSE.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Title 39 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

CHAPTER 80

South Carolina‑Bahamas Trade Commission

Section 39-80-100. (A) There is established the “South Carolina‑Bahamas Trade Commission” to advance bilateral trade and investment between South Carolina and The Bahamas. The commission consists of fifteen members appointed as follows:

(1) four members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, two of whom must be members of the House of Representatives;

(2) four members appointed by the President of the Senate, two of whom must be members of the Senate; and

(3) seven members appointed by the Governor:

(a) the Secretary of the Department of Commerce or his designee;

(b) the Commissioner of Agriculture or his designee;

(c) two representatives from state institutions of higher education;

(d) two members representing Bahamian Americans in South Carolina or Bahamian‑American communities; and

(e) one representative from a South Carolina business organization or trade organization.

(B) The members of the commission must be appointed for terms of four years each and until their successors are appointed and qualify, except that the seven members appointed by the Governor shall serve initial terms of two years each, the four members appointed by the President of the Senate shall serve initial terms of three years each, and the four members appointed by the Speaker shall serve initial terms of four years each. Members may be reappointed and must include:

(1) the Secretary of the Department of Commerce or his designee;

(2) the Commissioner of Agriculture or his designee;

(3) one representative from a state institution of higher education;

(4) at least two members representing Bahamian Americans in South Carolina or Bahamian‑American communities; and

(5) one representative from a South Carolina business organization or trade organization.

(C) Appointments must be made within ninety days following the enactment of this act. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

(D) Members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise available to the commission.

(E) The commission shall meet and hold hearings at designated places throughout the State.

(F) The Governor shall designate a chairperson or co‑chairpersons from among the commission members, serving at the Governor’s pleasure. The chairperson may appoint subcommittees and its chairpersons as deemed necessary. A majority of the commission members constitutes a quorum for conducting business.

(G) The commission’s purposes include:

(1) advancing bilateral trade and investment between South Carolina and The Bahamas;

(2) initiating joint action on policy issues of mutual interest;

(3) promoting business and academic exchanges;

(4) encouraging mutual economic support;

(5) encouraging mutual investment in infrastructure; and

(6) addressing other issues as determined by the commission.

(H) The commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly within one year of its initial meeting and by February first annually thereafter. The report must include recommendations to effectuate its purposes.

(I) The commission is authorized to raise funds through direct solicitation or fundraising events, alone or with other groups, and accept gifts, grants, and bequests to defray administrative expenses and carry out its purposes. Funds received shall be deposited with the State Treasurer and allocated to the Department of Commerce for these purposes. The Department may use appropriated funds for Foreign Operations to support the commission if sufficient nonappropriated funds are unavailable. Expenditures for administering the commission and fulfilling its purposes are exempt from the provisions of Title 11, Chapter 35 of the S.C. Code.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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