

Sustain SC Launches Pilot Study to Address SDG Ranking

South Carolina among lowest ranked states in the U.S. Sustainable Development Report

Columbia, SC (April 26, 2022)— South Carolina is ranked 37th out of 50 states in the 2021 United States Sustainable Development Report. Today Sustain SC and Ernst & Young (EY) have begun laying the groundwork to improve the ranking of South Carolina. Together, they will create a study to identify areas where South Carolina is falling behind and the necessary steps toward improvement.

[Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) are a collection of 17 interlinked goals designed to be a blueprint and standard by which all countries and states should measure progress. The SDGs were developed in 2015 and intended to be achievable by 2030. As the deadline draws nearer each year, the demand for realistic, business-minded goal posts grows.

In order to make meaningful progress, Sustain SC has engaged EY, a leader in sustainability, in assisting with a study identifying the most pressing SDG-categories as they relate to sustainability goals of South Carolina businesses. With over 1,200 international companies in the Palmetto State, many of these companies are beginning to use SDGs in their sustainability reporting. This comprehensive study will be the first of its kind in the nation, tailored to sustainability goals achievable at the local level. It will provide businesses a wealth of information to leverage, ultimately retaining them in South Carolina and attracting industries with the same goals in mind.

“This is a very timely and fortuitous relationship. This study will accelerate the opportunity for businesses in our state to actively commit to these sustainability goals,” said Sustain SC President & CEO Ethel Bunch. “This project makes sense and only enhances Sustain SC’s mission to connect the state’s businesses’ sustainability goals to local solutions that benefit the economy, environment and people. We are thrilled South Carolina will be the pilot study and serve as a model for other states to use.”

"We look forward to working alongside Sustain SC and others as we identify ways to enhance South Carolina's SDG rankings. EY is committed to building a better working world — one that creates sustainable and inclusive economic growth," said Jessica Donan, EY Greenville Managing Partner. "We believe that in order to survive and grow in an increasingly competitive and accountable business environment, ignoring sustainability, environmental, health and safety (EHS) and climate change risks and stakeholder concerns around these issues is no longer an option."

Today's announcement happens at the first-ever Sustainability Summit hosted by Sustain SC and Norfolk Southern. The summit is taking place at Brosnan Forest and brings together sustainability leaders from companies across the country, as well as local and state leaders. Owned and managed by Norfolk Southern, Brosnan Forest is a 14,400-acre ecological preserve in Dorchester County that is a regionally important hub of high-value habitat in one of the most rapidly developing areas of the state and a model for sustainability.

About Sustain SC:

[Sustain SC](#) is an economic development-driven organization that sets the table for conversations between businesses and local stakeholders so that Corporate Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) investments stay in South Carolina – benefiting both our economic and natural resource infrastructures.

About EY:

EY exists to build a better working world, helping create long-term value for clients, people and society and build trust in the capital markets. Enabled by data and technology, diverse EY teams in over 150 countries provide trust through assurance and help clients grow, transform and operate. Working across assurance, consulting, law, strategy, tax and transactions, EY teams ask better questions to find new answers for the complex issues facing our world today.

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