

TURNING A REPORT INTO ACTION AND LEGISLATIVE RESULTS



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Kudos to @PalmettoPromise Team - they provide great research. This @santeecooper report should be required reading for every legislator.

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New report from Palmetto Promise: Santee Cooper's failures could force South Carolinians to pay as much as \$750 more on their utility bills. bit.ly/2puq88O

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PARTNER NAME: Palmetto Promise

LOCATION: South Carolina

PROBLEM: Raise awareness and exposure for a policy report, in order to build momentum toward the sale of the state-owned public utility and spare ratepayers thousands of dollars in higher rates.

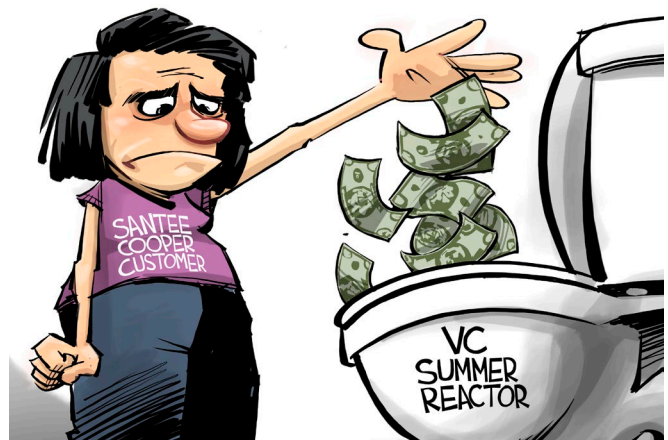
SOLUTION: Messaging strategy and eye-catching graphic design made front-page news and earned glowing praise from Governor McMaster.

It's not every day that a relatively young think tank with a staff of two receives gushing praise from a governor on social media.

But let's rewind and look at the strategy and execution that led us here.

Almost a month and half prior to its release, PPI and Think Freely Media began specifically planning for "Santee Cooper's Uncertain Future," a 49-page report on a bungled construction project that will have ratepayers on the hook for nearly \$8 billion in debt from the state-owned utility provider—all for a nuclear reactor that will never produce a single kilowatt of energy.

Even as the report was still being written, our team was working with PPI on building a new report template, plus creating infographics and tables as data came in. As the press conference for the release approached, we worked through the weekend and late the night before with PPI, in order to finish formatting and get last-minute edits in the paper.



We also provided messaging support on press outreach, encouraging our partner to take the high-level economic analysis and focus on the points that would best resonate with the media and ordinary South Carolinians. From the release: "In a sweeping analysis of Santee Cooper released by the Palmetto Promise Institute (PPI) today, economists project future Santee Cooper utility bills per residential customer must increase anywhere from \$167 to more than \$750 until the debt is paid off in 2056.

Industrial customers could see their bills increased by as much as \$80,000 a month."

The work paid off. The well-attended press conference resulted in positive news coverage from nearly all the state's largest newspapers, including The State, The Greenville News, The Post and Courier, The Associated Press, and several others.

The report and subsequent media coverage even prompted a statement from Santee Cooper itself, admitting that, yes, the failed project was forcing electric bills to rise and, yes, they would continue to rise.

And then that evening, the state's governor got involved, praising PPI for it's work.

Even days later the coverage continued to top google search results for "santee cooper" (see image in sidebar).

It doesn't stop with the report and press coverage, though. The report's findings call for the state legislature to take action toward selling Santee Cooper, sparing ratepayers from massive increases in fees over the next several decades. Our team is helping PPI raise money and execute a campaign to put pressure on lawmakers to do exactly that.

It's already bearing results. In early April, the state house overwhelmingly passed legislation that would call on the state to begin the process of fielding and vetting offers for the purchase of Santee Cooper—the recommended first-step of the report.

