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DJ 166-012-3  
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JUL 30 1976

Ms. Trova G. Ashworth  
Assistant Attorney General  
State of South Carolina  
Wade Hampton Office Building  
Post Office Box 11549  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Ms. Ashworth:

This is in reference to South Carolina State Act R626, the redistricting of the County Council of Bamberg County, South Carolina, submitted to the Attorney General pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended. Your submission was completed on May 31, 1976.

We have given careful consideration to the information provided as well as comments from interested parties. We are concerned under Section 5 with whether a districting plan dilutes the voting strength of any group of persons on the basis of race or color. An analysis of the submitted plan indicates that such dilution appears to exist in this plan.

Specifically, we note that the submitted plan provides a black population majority in four of the seven councilmanic districts (Districts 3, 4, 5 and 6) but a black majority in voting age population in only two districts (Districts 5 and 6). The resulting effect, against the background of racial bloc voting that appears to exist in this county, is that while blacks comprise at

least half of the voting age population and more than half of the county's total population, they will have the opportunity to elect candidates of their choice in only two out of seven councilmanic districts. Our analysis of the relevant data does not suggest a compelling reason for this result.

Therefore, I must on behalf of the Attorney General interpose an objection to Act R626 as it applies to the redistricting of the Bamberg County Council.

Of course you are permitted under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act to seek a declaratory judgment in the District Court for the District of Columbia that R626 does not have the purpose or effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color. However, until such a judgment is obtained the effect of the objection by the Attorney General is to render the change legally unenforceable.

Sincerely,

J. Stanley Pottinger  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division

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Ms. Treva G. Ashworth  
Assistant Attorney General  
State of South Carolina  
Wade Hampton Office Building  
Post Office Box 11549  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Ms. Ashworth:

This is in reference to your request for re-consideration of the objection interposed on July 30, 1976, to South Carolina State Act B626, which provides for the councilmanic redistricting of Bamberg County, South Carolina, submitted to the Attorney General pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended. Your additional information was received on October 14, 1976, and at your meeting of October 13, 1976, with Ms. Rebecca White and Mr. David Hunter of my staff.

We have given careful consideration to the information you have furnished, particularly that indicating widespread support for the plan in the black community and the black victories in recent elections. Based upon our review of these and other facts presented, this is to confirm your telephone conversation of October 30, 1976, with Mr. Gerald W. Jones of my staff who advised you that the Attorney General withdraws the objection interposed on July 30, 1976.

Sincerely,

J. Stanley Pottinger  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division