

Pickens County leaders urge removal of dam

Resolution drafted on third Twelve Mile dam

By Anna Simon

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PICKENS — Resolutions drafted by Pickens County's elected leaders ask a federal judge to use PCB-related settlement money to remove a third dam from the Twelve Mile River.

All members of the county delegation signed a resolution that has been mailed to Upstate Forever to take to an Oct. 13 federal court hearing, said state Sen. Larry Martin, R-Pickens.

"We continue to believe that taking out the third dam is a significant part of the total resolution of the Twelve Mile River issue," Martin said. "Leaving that third dam in just solves part of the problem."

A resolution approved by a Pickens County Council committee Thursday calls for removal of the Easley-Central Water District dam, restoration of the river in that area and installation of an alternative water supply system for the water district to be "the highest priority" for settlement money paid by Schlumberger Technology Corp.

The resolution will go Monday to the full council.

"Mitigation of this environmental disaster and return of the river to some semblance of natural value is not possible unless a true

and complete ecological restoration of the Twelve Mile River including the removal of the third dam is included in the final settlement and the river and its tributaries in the vicinity of the dam are restored," the county resolution states.

County Councilman Jim London told the committee that removal of the third dam should be considered the highest priority for the remaining money because 90 percent of the natural resource damage is in Pickens County.

The third-dam issue is the reason South Carolina's share of the settlement money hasn't been used yet, London said.

Larry Hudson, water district chairman, said the dam can be removed provided there's no expense or interruption in service to customers.

A 2006 court order signed by U.S. District Judge G. Ross Anderson Jr. called for removal of two dams and contaminated sediment behind them.

Schlumberger, which owns the former plant property, also was ordered to pay \$11.9 million to enhance fishing opportunities and restore habitat.

After *The Greenville News* reported the dams were still standing, Anderson scheduled a hearing to find out why. At the July 7 hearing, he set a one-year deadline for removal of the dams and scheduled the upcoming hearing on the third dam.