



Fast Facts

South Carolina Policy Council

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What is the South Carolina Research Authority?

That question was asked at a recent meeting of the House Ways & Means Committee – and not a single lawmaker had an answer. Here are 10 things you should know about our state’s “Research Authority.”

- (1) The South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA) is a **state-created and state-controlled** technology and real estate company. It contracts with private companies and government agencies (Boeing, the Department of Defense, *etc.*) to supply technology-based services.
- (2) Supposedly a “corporate” entity, SCRA **pays no income, property, or sales taxes.**
- (3) As a contractor, SCRA **competes directly against South Carolina-based firms.**
- (4) Combined, SCRA’s top five income-earners make **more than \$1 million annually.** And that does not include bonuses.
- (5) SCRA has received more than **1,500 acres in land from state and local governments.**
- (6) SCRA affiliate SC Launch, is funded through the Industry Partners Fund – donations to which receive a **100 percent credit against state taxes.** The Fund siphons away up to \$6 million from the state’s General Fund every year.
- (7) SCRA permits virtually **no transparency.** Board meetings are largely spent in “executive session,” and the agency simply refuses to respond to Freedom of Information requests.
- (8) Only **30 percent of SCRA’s work goes to firms located in South Carolina,** and around 30 percent of its employees are located outside the state.
- (9) SCRA has become involved in **high-risk financing.** Recently it loaned \$275,000 to a bus manufacturer after one of the company’s major backers pleaded guilty on fraud charges.
- (10) The new chairman of SCRA’s board is **also a top executive at Boeing.** Its last chairman resigned after repeated attempts to bring transparency to the agency proved impossible.

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