

HENRY MCMASTER, CHAIR
GOVERNOR
CURTIS M. LOFTIS, JR.
STATE TREASURER
BRIAN J. GAINES
COMPTROLLER GENERAL



THE DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

DELBERT H. SINGLETON, JR.
DIVISION DIRECTOR
(803) 734-8018

JOHN ST. C. WHITE
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT OFFICER
(803) 737-0600
FAX: (803) 737-0639

HARVEY S. PEELER, JR.
CHAIRMAN, SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
BRUCE W. BANNISTER
CHAIRMAN, HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
GRANT GILLESPIE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Protest Dismissal and Cancellation of Intended Award of Sole Source Contract

Matter of: Grace Outdoor Advertising LLC

File No.: 2026-129

Posting Date: December 22, 2025

Contracting Entity: University of South Carolina

Solicitation No.: N/A

Description: Sole Source for billboard advertising for specific locations in the Spartanburg, Asheville, Greenville, and Columbia areas.

DIGEST

The Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) dismisses as moot the protests of Grace Outdoor Advertising LLC (Grace) challenging the University of South Carolina's (USC) intent to award a sole source contract for billboard advertising for USC Upstate where USC has notified the CPO that the billboard advertising covered by the sole source is no longer within USC Upstate's advertising budget and no longer needed. Grace's protest is attached as Exhibit A.

AUTHORITY

The Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) conducted an administrative review per S.C. Code Ann. § 11-35-4210. This decision is based on materials in the procurement file and applicable law and precedents.

BACKGROUND

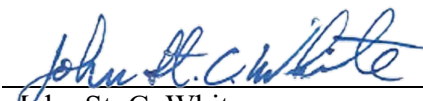
On December 9, 2025, USC advertised its intent to award a \$900,000 sole source contract to Lamar Advertising of Columbia (Lamar) for billboard advertising for specific locations in the Spartanburg, Asheville, Greenville, and Columbia areas. [Exhibit B] On December 11, 2025, Grace protested. On December 18, 2025, USC notified the CPO that it had “decided not to proceed with the sole source to Lamar Advertising.” [Exhibit C]

DISCUSSION

Due to USC’s notice that it no longer needs the services covered by its intended award of a sole source contract to Lamar and it is abandoning such a prospective contract, it is appropriate for the CPO to cancel the intended award of a sole source contract to Lamar per Regulation 19-445.2085C. This renders Grace’s protest moot.

DECISION

For the reasons stated above, the CPO cancels USC’s intended award of a sole source contract to Lamar for billboard advertising for specific locations in the Spartanburg, Asheville, Greenville, and Columbia areas and dismisses Grace’s protest as moot.



John St. C. White
Chief Procurement Officer

Columbia, South Carolina

STATEMENT OF RIGHT TO FURTHER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Protest Appeal Notice (Revised July 2025)

The South Carolina Procurement Code, in Section 11-35-4210, subsection 6, states:

(6) Finality of Decision. A decision pursuant to subsection (4) is final and conclusive, unless fraudulent or unless a person adversely affected by the decision requests a further administrative review by the Procurement Review Panel pursuant to Section 11-35-4410(1) within ten days of posting of the decision in accordance with subsection (5). The request for review must be directed to the appropriate chief procurement officer, who shall forward the request to the panel or to the Procurement Review Panel, and must be in writing, setting forth the reasons for disagreement with the decision of the appropriate chief procurement officer. The person also may request a hearing before the Procurement Review Panel. The appropriate chief procurement officer and an affected governmental body shall have the opportunity to participate fully in a later review or appeal, administrative or judicial.

Copies of the Panel's decisions and other additional information regarding the protest process is available on the internet at the following web site: <http://procurement.sc.gov>

FILING FEE: Pursuant to Proviso 111.1 of the 2025 General Appropriations Act, "[r]equests for administrative review before the South Carolina Procurement Review Panel shall be accompanied by a filing fee of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00), payable to the SC Procurement Review Panel. The panel is authorized to charge the party requesting an administrative review under the South Carolina Code Sections 11-35-4210(6), 11-35-4220(5), 11-35-4230(6) and/or 11-35-4410...Withdrawal of an appeal will result in the filing fee being forfeited to the panel. If a party desiring to file an appeal is unable to pay the filing fee because of financial hardship, the party shall submit a completed Request for Filing Fee Waiver form at the same time the request for review is filed. *[The Request for Filing Fee Waiver form is attached to this Decision.]* If the filing fee is not waived, the party must pay the filing fee within fifteen days of the date of receipt of the order denying waiver of the filing fee. Requests for administrative review will not be accepted unless accompanied by the filing fee or a completed Request for Filing Fee Waiver form at the time of filing." PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO THE "SC PROCUREMENT REVIEW PANEL."

LEGAL REPRESENTATION: In order to prosecute an appeal before the Panel, business entities organized and registered as corporations, limited liability companies, and limited partnerships must be represented by a lawyer. Failure to obtain counsel will result in dismissal of your appeal. *Protest of Lighting Services*, Case No. 2002-10 (Proc. Rev. Panel Nov. 6, 2002) and *Protest of The Kardon Corporation*, Case No. 2002-13 (Proc. Rev. Panel Jan. 31, 2003); and *Protest of PC&C Graces, LLC*, Case No. 2012-1 (Proc. Rev. Panel April 2, 2012). However, individuals and those operating as an individual doing business under a trade name may proceed without counsel, if desired.

**South Carolina Procurement Review Panel
Request for Filing Fee Waiver
1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 366, Columbia, SC 29201**

Name of Requestor

Address

City

State

Zip

Business Phone

-
1. What is your/your company's monthly income? _____
 2. What are your/your company's monthly expenses? _____
 3. List any other circumstances which you think affect your/your company's ability to pay the filing fee:

To the best of my knowledge, the information above is true and accurate. I have made no attempt to misrepresent my/my company's financial condition. I hereby request that the filing fee for requesting administrative review be waived.

Sworn to before me this
_____ day of _____, 20_____

Notary Public of South Carolina

Requestor/Appellant

My Commission expires: _____

For official use only: _____ Fee Waived _____ Waiver Denied

Chairman or Vice Chairman, SC Procurement Review Panel

This _____ day of _____, 20_____
Columbia, South Carolina

NOTE: If your filing fee request is denied, you will be expected to pay the filing fee within fifteen (15) days of the date of receipt of the order denying the waiver.

Exhibit A

From: [Diana Stevenson](#)
To: [Protest-MMO](#)
Cc: jo.sullivan@sc.edu; [Josh Madsen](#); [Hal W Stevenson](#)
Subject: [External] protest
Date: Thursday, December 11, 2025 4:21:18 PM
Attachments: [USC - Lamar Advertising.pdf](#)

To Whom it may Concern,
I would like to protest the attached sole source opportunity:
USC for Lamar Advertising

Grace Outdoor Advertising is a local outdoor company that owns and operates traditional and digital billboards across Columbia and SC. I can see no reason why a local company would not be able to bid on this offering and why it should only go to one company. Grace Outdoor is a SC company with headquarters in Columbia. The owners of the company are both Alumni as are many of the employees.

Lamar Advertising is a company with headquarters in Louisiana. It is a very large national company.

The University should seek to work with local vendors spending SC taxpayers' dollars here in SC. In fact according to the USC procurement website this is what comes up:

**Our department is committed to developing
successful relationships with small and local
businesses.**

Grace Outdoor Advertising would like the opportunity to bid on this campaign.

Respectfully,
Diana Stevenson

Diana Stevenson
Chief Executive Officer
Grace Outdoor Advertising
Cell: (803) 319-4381
Check out our full [inventory](#)

South Carolina Business Opportunities

Published by Division of Procurement Services - Delbert H. Singleton, Jr., Division Director

Notice Of Intent To Sole Source By: University of South Carolina

Ad Category: Sole Source and Emergency

Notice Start Date: December 9, 2025

Notice End Date: December 23, 2025

Vendor Name: Lamar Advertising of Columbia

Contract Amount: 900000.00

Agency Procurement Manager: Johanne Sullivan

Agency Procurement Manager Email: jo.sullivan@sc.edu

Agency Procurement Manager Telephone#: (803) 777-1015

The Agency hereby provides notice that it intends to enter into a sole source contract per S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-1560 with Vendor for the following supplies, services, information technology, or construction:

USC Upstate intends to enter into a sole source contract per S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-1560 to sole source billboard advertising to Lamar Advertising of Columbia for specific locations in the Spartanburg, Asheville, Greenville, and Columbia areas.

Agency's justification for a sole source procurement may be viewed or immediately obtained at: Agency Procurement Manager (Listed Above)

PROTESTS:

Any actual or prospective bidder, offeror, contractor, or subcontractor aggrieved in connection with the intended award or award of this sole source contract, shall notify the appropriate chief Procurement officer in writing of its intent to protest within five (5) business days of the date this notice is posted. Any actual or prospective bidder, offeror, contractor, or subcontractor who is aggrieved in connection with the intended award or award of this sole source contract and has timely notified the appropriate chief procurement officer of its intent to protest, may protest to the appropriate chief procurement officer in the manner set forth below within fifteen days of the date this notice is posted; except that a matter that could have been raised as a protest of the solicitation may not be raised as a protest of the award or intended award of a contract.

A protest must be in writing, filed with the appropriate chief procurement officer, and set forth the grounds of the protest and the relief requested with enough particularity to give notice of the issues to be decided. The protest must be received by the appropriate chief procurement officer within the time provided above. Days are calculated as provided in S.C. Code Ann. § 11-35-310(13).

Any Notice Of Intent To Protest And Protest Must Be Addressed To: Materials Management Officer

South Carolina Business Opportunities • SCBO Team • 1333 Main Street, Suite 700 • Columbia, SC 29201
803-737-0600 • scbo@mmo.sc.gov • <https://scbo.sc.gov> • <https://procurement.sc.gov>




UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
JUSTIFICATION FOR
SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT

Buyer: Johanne Sullivan

Agency: University of South Carolina

Sole Source Vendor: Lamar Advertising of Columbia

Requisition ID#: 1000091383

PO#:

Amount: \$ 900,000.00 (5 years 1/1/2026 – 12/31/2030)

Commodity Code: 915

Based upon the following determination, the University of South Carolina proposes to acquire the supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services described herein from the Vendor named above per S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-1560 and S.C. Regulation 19-445.2105, Sole Source Procurement.

Description of the Agency need that this procurement meets:

The USC Upstate Department of Communications and Marketing's goal is to reach potential students by advertising in areas near Spartanburg, Asheville, Columbia, and Greenville, where both local and secondary markets will be exposed to the brand of the university. Use of billboards (both static and digital) in specific locations that meet the demographics of the target audience and traffic are critical to assist Upstate in meeting this goal.

Description of market research Agency performed to determine the availability of products or services that would meet the Agency's needs:

The Department of Communications and Marketing is currently renting static and digital outdoor advertisements from Lamar Advertising in these specific locations. An internet search was conducted to confirm the specific geographic locations were owned by Lamar Advertising.

Description of supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services Vendor will provide under the contract and justification of need:

USC Upstate is currently renting twelve (12) billboards from Lamar Advertising. Five of the billboards are in Greenville, three in Spartanburg plus digital boards in Asheville and Columbia. USC Upstate is seeking to continue this advertising space with Lamar Advertising on an as needed basis. USC Upstate may also add additional billboards or discontinue others throughout the years based on the demographics of the targeted audiences and traffic.

Detailed explanation why no other vendor's supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services will meet the needs of the Agency:

Based on specific locations in various areas, size of the board, demographics of the target audience and traffic passing the location, specific outdoor board locations provided by unique vendors must be purchased. These boards provided by Lamar Advertising of Columbia are unique in the above qualifications. Lamar Advertising of Columbia is the only digital board provider in these specific locations.



Authorized Signature

Printed Name: Venis Manigo

Title: Associate Vice President & CPO

Date: 12/8/25

Notes: Authorized signature is the agency head unless the agency head has delegated that authority. Delegation of authority must be submitted to the Materials Management Officer in writing. The Agency must obtain a Drug-free Workplace certification from the Vendor if the sole source procurement is \$50,000 or greater.

Exhibit C

From: [Sullivan, Jo](#)
To: [White, John](#)
Cc: [Cash, Tammy](#)
Subject: [External] Cancelling Lamar Advertising Sole Source>>RE: protest
Date: Thursday, December 18, 2025 1:37:15 PM
Attachments: [USC - Lamar Advertising.pdf](#)

John,

I discussed this with USC Upstate, and we have decided not to proceed with the sole source to Lamar Advertising for a billboard campaigns as needed in the Spartanburg, Asheville, Greenville, and Columbia areas in the amount of \$900,000 for a 5-year term. How do we proceed? Do we need to advertise the cancellation in SCBO? Or do I need to get Grace Outdoor to withdraw their protest?

For full transparency, we do need to process a sole source in the amount of \$25,389 for a one specific billboard near campus for one year starting 12/29/25. It is my understanding that due to the advertising budget being reduced, this is the only billboard in USC Upstate's budget.

Best regards,
Jo

Johanne "Jo" Sullivan, CPPO, CPPB
System Director for Strategic Sourcing and Special Projects
Purchasing Department
803-777-1015
jo.sullivan@sc.edu
University of South Carolina



From: Diana Stevenson <diana@graceoutdoor.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 11, 2025 4:18 PM
To: Protest-MMO@mmo.sc.gov
Cc: Sullivan, Jo <jo.sullivan@sc.edu>; Josh Madsen <josh@graceoutdoor.com>; Hal W Stevenson <hal@graceoutdoor.com>
Subject: protest

To Whom it may Concern,
I would like to protest the attached sole source opportunity:
USC for Lamar Advertising

Grace Outdoor Advertising is a local outdoor company that owns and operates traditional and digital billboards across Columbia and SC. I can see no reason why a

local company would not be able to bid on this offering and why it should only go to one company.

Grace Outdoor is a SC company with headquarters in Columbia. The owners of the company are both Alumni as are many of the employees.

Lamar Advertising is a company with headquarters in Louisiana. It is a very large national company.

The University should seek to work with local vendors spending SC taxpayers' dollars here in SC. In fact according to the USC procurement website this is what comes up:

Our department is committed to developing successful relationships with small and local businesses.

Grace Outdoor Advertising would like the opportunity to bid on this campaign.

Respectfully,
Diana Stevenson

Diana Stevenson
Chief Executive Officer
Grace Outdoor Advertising
Cell: (803) 319-4381
Check out our full [inventory](#)