



The Capitol Report March 23rd, 2005

Provided by The Georgia Railroad Association

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No more than four legislative days remain in the 2005 session of the Georgia General Assembly. The legislature is scheduled to meet tomorrow and then Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday of next week. There is a chance, however, that adjournment will come on Thursday, the 39th legislative day, rather than the traditional 40th day.

Senate strikes longer trailer provision.

The Senate on Wednesday voted 49 – 0 in favor of an amendment to strike from HB 279 a provision to allow 57-foot trailers on Georgia highways. Senator Casey Cagle of Gainesville introduced the amendment at the request of GRA. With the 57-foot trailer provision deleted, the bill passed with only six dissenting votes.

Proponents of the longer trailers withdrew an amendment to restrict their use to the interstate system. With the withdrawal of that amendment, the GRA amendment passed without a dissenting vote. Rep. Johnny Floyd, the sponsor of HB 279, has indicated he will move that the House agree to the Senate version of the bill.

As passed by the Senate, HB 279 provides a 5% weight variance for trucks hauling forest and farm products from the field for up to 100 miles. The Senate also added an amendment increasing penalties for trucks that exceed the variance.

The American Automobile Association, and the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks joined GRA in actively working the Senate in opposition to the 57-foot trailers. The Georgia Sheriff's Association also made some key contacts, expressing concern about safety issues related to longer trucks. The Georgia Motor Truckers Association also made their opposition known.

While the united front presented by these groups was important, it was the back-home constituent contacts of their members – including GRA members -- that assured the victory.

GRA Directory: New Members, Services and Categories!

Remember to use the GRA website when shopping for goods and services. It's fast and easy! Just go to www.georgiarailroad.org and click on "DIRECTORY" on the upper left navigation bar on the home page. Then click on "services" at the top of the directory page for a list of service providers from "bridges" to "welding."