



Legislative Update

February 26, 2021

GRA Legislative Agenda Items

Truck Size and Weight: Oppose any legislation that increases the allowable size and weight of truck carrying freight. Typically, advocates seek to revise O.C.G.A. 32-6-26 (g) (1), which allows for a weight increase and various radius distance increases for forest products, live poultry, cotton, feed, granite, raw ore or minerals, solid waste concrete or poultry.

This week the Senate Transportation Committee heard testimony on Senator Tyler Harper's (R-Ocilla) [Senate Bill 118](#), which would allow for the issuance of an annual forest product permit allowing 100,000 lbs. for vehicles hauling forest products from the forest where cut to the first point of marketing or processing if the vehicle has six axles.

Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Frank Ginn created a subcommittee to analyze and research the bill between this session and the next session. The Sub-committee Members are Sen. Ginn, Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega), Sen. David Lucas (D-Macon), Sen. Burt Jones (R-Jackson), Sen. Lindsey Tippins (R-Marietta), and the bill's author Sen. Tyler Harper (R-Ocilla).

While we are encouraged by Chairman Ginn's action, we will continue to actively oppose the bill through the end of session.

Last week Representative James Burchett (R-Waycross) introduced [House Bill 496](#), which also seeks to increase the allowable weight to 95,000 lbs. for trucks carrying forest products. We will be continuing to monitor this legislation and actively work with other groups opposed to increased truck weights to ensure this legislation does not pass. It has not received a hearing by the House Transportation Committee.

Short Line Tax Credit: Last week House Transportation Chairman Rick Jasperse (R-Jasper) introduced [House Bill 452](#), which will extend the sunset for the short line income tax credit by five years from December 30, 2023 to December 30, 2028. This week the measure was included in [House Bill 587](#) (see page 21), the Georgia Economic Recovery Act of 2021, which also addresses several other income tax credits.

The bill is being carried by House Majority Caucus Secretary/Treasurer Bruce Williamson (R-Monroe). GRA has been actively lobbying for the short line tax credit sunset extension, and HB 587 was favorably reported out of the Ways and Means Income Tax Subcommittee and then the full Ways and Means Committee this week. In the hearing, committee members spoke very positively about the Class III income tax credit. We will be lobbying for its selection by the House Rules Committee so that it can be voted on by the full House ahead of Crossover Day.

Two Man Crew: Oppose any legislation which would seek to require a train that is in use for the movement of freight to operate with at least two crew members. Similar legislation was introduced in the 2019 session. We are closely monitoring this issue, but no legislation has been introduced at this point.

Blocked Crossing: Oppose any bills that would prevent a railroad common carrier from authorizing the operation of a train that causes a road to be blocked for longer than 15 minutes. Similar legislation has been introduced in recent years. Freshman Representative Mesha Mainor (D-Atlanta) introduced [House Bill 139](#), which prohibits a train from blocking any street, road, or highway grade crossing for longer than 15 minutes, except under certain circumstances. This bill was assigned to the House Transportation Committee for consideration, but it has not received a hearing.

Georgia 811: Oppose any legislation which would remove the Georgia 811 exemption for railroads, thereby requiring them to join Georgia 811, “call before you dig.” Georgia code currently exempts railroads from mandatory Georgia 811 membership. Any attempts to change the law to make Georgia 811 membership compulsory for railroads would be harmful to the industry, as it would slow railroads down. We are closely monitoring this issue, but no legislation has been introduced at this point.

Overview of General Assembly