



LEGISLATIVE Update

13 January 2017

2017 General Assembly Convenes

The Georgia General Assembly began the 2017 session on Monday January 9, 2017. In the midst of new legislators finding their offices and veterans moving around the Capitol, both the House and Senate also went to work on the state's business.

On Wednesday, Governor Nathan Deal outlined his spending priorities in a speech to the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and the State of the State address to a joint session of the General Assembly. The House conducted expedited joint hearings on the amended FY 2017 budget. Of particular interest was Speaker David Ralston's announcement of his intention to create a House task force to study transit and freight issues.

Also, the House and Senate conducted important internal business, including the naming of committees and making of new rules. In the Senate, Senator Brandon Beach has been appointed Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee.

In the House, Representative Kevin Tanner has been appointed chairman of the House Transportation Committee, and Representative Sam Watson has been appointed as Vice Chairman of the committee. Representative Jason Shaw has been named chairman of the newly created House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation Infrastructure.

After breaking next week for the MLK Holiday, budget hearings, and the Presidential Inauguration, the legislature will return for a Monday through Thursday schedule for the following two weeks.

GRA Legislative Matters of Interest

Because this is the beginning of a new General Assembly, there are no carry-over bills. We are continuing to work closely with Senate President Pro Tem David Shafer (R-Duluth) on his initiative to create a freight rail program. This bill aligns with the Senate Republican Caucus agenda.

What to expect next week:

- **Budget:** The House and Senate Appropriation Committees will conduct their joint committee hearings on the FY 2018 budget on Tuesday and Wednesday.
- **New Bills:** The GRA Bill Tracking Document will begin next week, and we will have a formal tracking document for bills of specific and general interest to GRA and its members.