



*LEGISLATIVE Update*

*January 29, 2018*

### **GRA in Action - 2018 General Assembly**

The 2018 General Assembly promises to be an important session for the Georgia Railroad Association as we advocate for several specific issues of importance to our members. These issues have been framed by the House Rural Development Council report that recommended a tax credit for private rail investment, increased funding for state owned lines, and a recognition of the industry's issue regarding the taxing of diesel fuel used in locomotives.

GRA is extremely grateful for the leadership of Speaker Ralston and the Council's co-chairs Rep. Jay Powell and Rep. Terry England. The Council report is consistent with the ongoing work of GRA champions such as Senator David Shafer, Senator Steve Gooch, and House Transportation Chairman Kevin Tanner.

One exciting development this past week was the introduction of HB 735 that creates a 45G style state tax credit. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Patty Bentley (D-Butler) seeks to implement the tax credit recommendation of the House Rural Development Council.

The week also saw the House and Senate pass an adjournment resolution that schedules Crossover Day (Day 30) for March 5 and Sine Die (Day 40) on March 29. The legislature is on a Monday through Thursday schedule through the month of February. With candidates qualifying for office in early March and the May 22 Primary election, members are anxious to complete their work and return home to campaign for re-election. <http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/SR/631>

### **GRA Legislative Tracking**

- **HB 735:** This bill co-sponsored by Rep. Patty Bentley, and co-sponsored by the House Rural Development Council members Jay Powell, Robert Dickey, Terry England would create a tax credit based upon the provisions of the federal 45 G program. Eligible rail roads will receive a 50% tax credit for investment up to \$3500 per rail mile. GRA is working with legislators to strengthen and perfect the language of the bill. We are hopeful that the bill will be heard in a Ways & Means sub-committee during the week of January 29. <http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/HB/735>
- **SB 89:** The 'Right Track Act' championed by Senate President Pro Tem David Shafer (R-Duluth) is one of the GRA's primary agenda items. This bill, which unanimously passed by the Senate last year is expected to be heard in House Transportation Committee after cross-over. GRA has

worked closely with Chairman Tanner and others to address issues relating to the scope of the bill and the state's gratuity clause.

- HR 848: This resolution created the House Commission on Transit Governance and Funding, chaired by House Transportation Chair Kevin Tanner (R-Dawsonville). GRA monitored these meetings and made a presentation during their meeting in Columbus. The Committee's report is expected to be released by early February. GRA is closely monitoring this committee and the effects of its recommendations upon freight rail. <http://www.house.ga.gov/Committees/en-US/TransitGovernanceandFunding.aspx>

**What to expect next week:**

- Next week, the legislature is in session on Monday through Thursday.
- GRA will be working to get HB 735 heard by a Ways & Means sub-committee.
- The House sub-committees will continue to conduct budget hearings on the Amended '18 and '19 budgets.