



LEGISLATIVE Update

March 13, 2017

General Assembly Update

Now that the Crossover Day has passed, the list of bills that require monitoring has narrowed and is in clear focus. The legislature spent the past week beginning their review of these surviving bills, and passing a few noncontroversial bills.

This week the General Assembly will complete Day 35 on Thursday as Sine Die (Day 40) approaches on March 30.

GRA Legislative Tracking

- **SB 89:** The ‘Right Track Act’ championed by Senate President Pro Tem David Shafer (R-Duluth) is the GRA’s primary agenda item. This bill passed the Senate unanimously. As planned, the House will take up the bill over the interim for consideration in 2018. This week, GRA will join in a presentation to the House Transportation Committee on freight rail issues and funding.
- **SB 6 and HB 160:** Each of these bills, SB 6 by Senator Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega) and HB 158 by House Transportation Chair Kevin Tanner (R-Dawsonville) have passed their respective chambers. These bills create a mechanism for the study of a statewide transit plan. It is expected that freight rail will be addressed as well. GRA will monitor these bills, which are likely to be merged into a single act.
- **SB 160:** This is a Senate priority called “Back the Badge” that adds additional criminal penalties when a law enforcement officer is assaulted. The bill was amended to include railroad security officers, and is expected to be heard by the House Non-Civil Judiciary soon.
- **HR 369:** This initiative by Speaker Ralston and Rep. Sam Watson creates a Rural Development Council that will hold sessions throughout the year to address rural Georgia’s challenges. GRA intends to monitor and participate in the meetings to highlight the economic development potential of rail and rail investment to rural Georgia.

- **HB 265:** This Administration bill amends the Quality Jobs Tax Credit by allowing qualified projects which have at least \$2.5 million investment to receive a subsequent quality jobs tax credit if fifty or more new quality jobs above its previous single year high of the average number of jobs are created. The bill passed the Senate Finance Committee and appears headed toward final passage.
- **HB 328:** This GDOT bill conforms state provisions to the recent changes in the federal act. GRA is watching the bill closely since there is a minor noncontroversial amendment to the current provision relating to truck weights. GRA opposes any amendment to the bill that would allow for a weight increase.
- **SB 219:** This bill by Senator Steve Gooch addresses some basic licensing and other issues pertaining to autonomous vehicles. GRA is monitoring the autonomous vehicle issue closely and will report further on this bill that current is in the House Transportation Committee
- **HB 481:** This bill by House Transportation Chairman Kevin Tanner preempts local ordinances relating to drones. The narrowly drawn bill is a follow up from the bill that was vetoed last year by Governor Deal because of the federal preemption issue. The bill is in Senate Transportation Committee and is expected to move.

What to expect this week:

- The General Assembly will be in session Monday through Thursday.
- GRA will be part of a GDOT presentation to the House Transportation Committee.
- The Senate will likely take up the FY 2018 so that a conference Committee can begin their work in the two weeks that will remain after this week.

Upcoming Events:

April 17th: GRA Legislative Work Session on SB 89 in Atlanta.

May 15 and 16: GRA Annual Meeting at Brasstown Valley Resort.