



LEGISLATIVE Update

March 27, 2017

General Assembly Update

Several bills of importance were considered and acted upon by the General Assembly during the past week, including a session day that went late on Friday evening. This week, the General Assembly will complete Day 39 on Tuesday with as Sine Die (Day 40) on Thursday 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. Last week, the GRA team joined GDOT in making 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 and are resting in the other chamber’s Rules Committee. These bills create a mechanism for the study of a statewide transit plan, including a study of freight rail. It is likely that the Senate bill will move and the two versions will be combined either by agreement or a conference committee.
- **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 passed the House on Friday evening. After a routine agree by the Senate, the bill will be sent to the governor for signature.
- **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 achieved final passage last week and is headed to the governor's desk.

- **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. The bill passed the Senate without amendment and is headed to the governor for his signature.
- **SB 219:** This bill by Senator Steve Gooch addresses some basic licensing and other issues pertaining to autonomous vehicles. GRA has monitored the bill through its passage through the House and will follow it as it travels back to the Senate for an agree motion to the House substitute.
- **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 was on the Senate floor calendar on Friday but was tabled when the Senate chose to not complete the calendar.

What to expect this week:

- The General Assembly will be in session on Tuesday and Sine Die on Thursday.

Upcoming Events:

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

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