



*LEGISLATIVE Update*

*March 29, 2018*

### **2018 General Assembly Concludes**

The 2018 Georgia General Assembly ended at midnight on March 29th. The major initiatives of the 2018 General Assembly were influenced by election year politics, including transit, tax cuts, criminal justice reform, distracted driving, a referendum for a new business court, and three specific issues of importance to GRA.

We are especially pleased about the passage of HB 735 that included the tax credit and important storm water exemptions for various railroad facilities. This bill resulted from months of work that began at our annual meeting in June.

The critical step was a panel presentation by GRA in Waycross to the House Rural Development Council. Because of the advocacy of our members, the issue was included in the Council's recommendations to the Speaker. During the legislative process, our coalition, worked to strengthen the bill.

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/HB/735>

In addition to the tremendous support from House and Senate leadership, GRA is extremely grateful for the hard work of House Sponsor Rep. Patty Bentley (D-Butler), and Senate Sponsor Steve Gooch (R- Dahunega) as they each shepherded the bill through the process.

GRA is grateful for the passage of SB 409, an important safety measure that was part of the GRA legislative agenda. GRA also made tremendous progress on SB 89, the Georgia Freight Rail Program, but the bill was caught up in the time crunch on the final night of the session. Also, no negative bills such as truck weight increases, or crossing restrictions were passed.

The 2018 General Assembly will be remembered as an excellent year for GRA and we are grateful for everyone's support.