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Legislative Policy Teams



4

2023-2024 Legislative Sessions



- 4,723 Bills and Resolutions Introduced
- 1519 House Bills
- 588 Senate Bills
- 725 Bills became law

5

Additional Infrastructure Funding

HB 915 - Amended FY 2024 Budget (Rep. Jon Burns - 159th) Effective February 29, 2024.

- \$50,000,000 for Rural Workforce Housing Fund/One Georgia Authority (plus another \$6,000,000 in FY 2025 Budget)
- \$250,000,000 for GEFA loan funding (water, wastewater, storm water)
- \$250,000,000 for GA DOT - Local Road Administration Grants (administered similar to LMIG but without match)

6

Additional TSPLOST Option

HB 946 - Single County TSPLOST (Rep. Lee Hawkins - 27th) *Effective May 6, 2024.*

- Previously, if any city in a county didn't sign onto the IGA for the tax, then it can only be collected at a rate of .75%.
- This bill now just requires more than 50% of the municipal population to sign the IGA and it can be collected at 1%.
- The remaining cities that do not sign on will be considered absent municipalities, receiving their portion of the tax based on a formula similar to how LMIG is distributed:
 - their proportionate share of the municipal population and total municipal centerline miles in the county
- If all cities sign the IGA, the tax may be levied for up to 6 years.



7

Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan

HB 617 - Highways, bridges, and ferries; development and maintenance of state-wide freight and logistics implementation plan (Rep. Rick Jasperse - 11th) *Effective July 1, 2024.*

- DOT Director of Planning to develop and maintain state-wide freight and logistics plan with a 20-year horizon.
- Consider projects and corridors based on economic zones.
- Annual reports to the House and Senate Transportation Committees.
- Georgia Freight 2050 Program funding; including federal allocations and annual state appropriation; to implement the plan.



8

Revised Building Permit Fees

HB 461 - Building Permit Fees: Eliminate One Method of Calculation (Rep. Brad Thomas - 21st) *Effective July 1, 2024.*

- Revises the methods for calculating regulatory fees, specifically for building inspection fees
- This bill removes the ability to base a permit fee for renovation projects on the cost of the project (removes method 6 under law)
- In addition to new construction, projects classified as extensive renovations can now also be based on square footage
- "Extensive Renovation Projects" means a project valued at \$75,000 or more to renovate an existing structure building inspection fees.
- May require updating or replacing current software used for fee calculation.



9

Overdose Medicine in Buildings

SB 395 - Required Placement of Opioid Medication (Sen. Clint Dixon - 45th) Effective July 1, 2024.

- Cities and counties must provide at least three doses of opioid antagonists in courthouses and other buildings where the local governing authority meets - and where there is an automated external defibrillator.
- Governments must establish an internal training policy for antagonist administration.
- Shields employees from liability if they act in good faith or fail to act.
- Shields governments from liability if they fail to provide the antagonists.



10

Proposed Housing Incentives

HB 1266 – The CHOICE Act (Rep. Dale Washburn) FAILED

- Aimed at incentivizing local governments to adopt zoning and land use policies that allow/encourage density and are seen to promote affordable housing within their respective jurisdictions.
- While participation is not required, local governments attaining certain designations will receive preferential treatment in applying for state DCA, GEFA and other grants and loans over those local governments which do not.
- Examples of ordinances included: reducing minimum lot/home/frontage/height size; eliminating design standards; permitting all building materials that meet IRC; allowing multifamily, townhomes and ADUs in SFR; applying IRC to buildings that contain up to four residential units; reducing/eliminating building permit fees; streamlining permit process; etc.



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Zoning Procedures (et al.)

HB 1073 - Zoning: Halfway Houses and Drug Rehabilitation Centers (Rep. Dale Washburn - 144th) Effective May 6, 2024.

- Cities and Counties are no longer required to impose additional procedures for zoning decisions involving the location of halfway houses and drug rehabilitation centers in their jurisdictions.
 - Eliminates extra hearings and notices.
- Prohibits local governments from requiring gas stations to place cameras in the interior or exterior of their business (DeKalb County).
- Allows cities to designate special entertainment districts to extend the hours for alcohol to be consumed on the premises (Atlanta/Savannah).




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Eviction Procedures

HB 1203 - Housing: Dispossession Proceedings (Rep. Trey Kelley - 16th)
Effective April 24, 2024.

- Provides that if a sheriff, deputy sheriff, constable, or marshal is unable to evict (dispossession proceedings) someone within 30 days from the landlord's application, the landlord, at their expense, may utilize the services of one of any of these off-duty officials or others certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council to do so.



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Zoning Moratorium Restrictions

HB 514 - Limit Zoning Moratoriums to 180 Days (Rep. Dale Washburn) **FAILED**

Limits local government zoning or permitting moratoriums or single-family residences to a maximum of 180 days.

- Any subsequent moratoriums cannot be enacted less than 180 days after a moratorium has lapsed. Requires zoning application fees, review fees, and other fees to be used solely for zoning administration. These fees can be waived for single-family homes less than 2,500 square feet.
- Moratoriums can be extended if a local government is responding to:
 - A natural disaster
 - A state of emergency
 - Health or safety concerns
 - Judicial order
 - A third-party or in-house study is being conducted to revise local ordinances




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Squatters

HB 1017 - Housing: Georgia Squatters Reform Act (Rep. Devan Seabaugh - 34th) Effective April 24, 2024.

- Those accused of squatting must present, within three days, to the head of the local law enforcement agency, documentation that authorizes their entry on the land or premises at question.
- If they cannot, they are subject to arrest.
- If they can, a hearing must take place within seven days before the magistrate court to determine the authenticity of the documentation.
- Those in violation of this law shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.



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Rental Housing Standards

HB 404 - Safe at Home Act (Rep. Kasey Carpenter - 4th) Effective July 1, 2024.

- Implied warranty that dwelling is “fit for human habitation”
- Two months rent as security deposit.
- Three-day notice of nonpayment before eviction.



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Clean Energy – Building Improvements

HB 206 - Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) (Rep. Steven Sainz) Effective July 1, 2024.

Authorizes local development authorities to finance energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, and resilience improvements on private commercial property.

- Counties/cities may enter into intergovernmental agreements with development authorities to finance such improvements.
- Allows commercial property owners to finance the up-front cost of energy or other eligible improvements on a property and repay the cost over time through a voluntary tax assessment.
- Assessments are tied to property rather than individuals, ensuring that financial obligations can be transferred upon sale



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Service Delivery Strategy Reform

HB 1407 - SDS Law Revisions (Rep. John LaHood - 175th) Effective January 1, 2026.

Makes several procedural revisions to the process of negotiating a service delivery strategy.

- Authorizes counties to utilize several additional unincorporated revenues to pay for unincorporated services.
- Sets a standard for when negotiations must begin, when they can be called due to a change of circumstances, when they must end, and provides other deadlines throughout the process.
 - Continue to follow the county's Comprehensive Plan calendar (with DCA flexibility)
- Requires DCA to develop optional statewide mapping standards for SDS negotiations.
- Provides for mandatory mediation and optional arbitration processes, while still allowing a party to petition the superior court to resolve any outstanding disagreements.
- Adds some exceptions to the imposition of sanctions following an SDS impasse.
- Provides that if any change in service delivery or revenue distribution arrangements affects less than all the parties, an amendment to the strategy is limited to the participation of only those parties affected by the change.
- Prohibits DCA from promulgating any SDS rules or regulations unless they are specifically authorized to do so by law.




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Private Water Systems

HB 1146 - Private Water Permitting (Rep. Ron Stephens) *Effective July 1, 2024*

Requires that the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) issue water permits to private water providers, without the consent of the local government, in areas designated as "coastal aquifers of the state" if the local government cannot provide public water service within an 18-month period.

- Sunsets on January 1, 2029.




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Private Water Study Committee

HB 1498 – Study Committee on Private Water Systems (Rep. Trey Rhodes, 124th)

- Creates a study committee to analyze the operations of private water systems across the state.
- Considers whether these systems should be regulated more, and to what extent.
- Examines availability, quality, and affordability of water services.
- No doubt, any forthcoming legislation will ultimately look to regulating public water rates as well.




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Costs of Unpermitted Events

SB 443 - Nuisances: Locals May be Reimbursed Costs for Non-Permitted Events (Sen. Ben Watson - 1st) *Effective April 8, 2024.*

- Authorizes local governments to seek and receive reimbursement for all incurred public safety costs and fees from promoters or organizers who host or organize events which have not been properly permitted and which create a public nuisance.




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Assaults on Utility Workers

HB 1033 - Utility Worker Protection Act (Rep. Rob Leverett - 123rd)
Effective May 6, 2024, and applicable to offenses committed on or after July 1, 2024.

- Provides protection for utility workers against any individual who threatens or assaults them while performing official duties.
- Provides enhanced penalties for crimes committed upon utility workers in certain circumstances.




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Use of Government Vehicles

HB 1100 - Ease Restrictions on Use of Government Vehicles (Rep. Kimberly New - 64th)
Effective April 22, 2024.

- Removes the requirement for vehicles receiving government tags to be exclusively for governmental functions.
- Updates the definition of "fleet" to include trailers in addition to motor vehicles.




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Property Ownership Restrictions

SB 420 - Nonresident Aliens Cannot Own Certain Land, and Transfer-on-Death Deeds (Sen. Jason Anavitarte - 31st)
Effective July 1, 2024.

- Prohibits nonresident foreign aliens from acquiring, directly or indirectly, any possessory interest in agricultural land or land within a 10-mile radius of any military base, military installation, or military airport in Georgia.
- Does not apply to residential property.
- Allows a property owner to sign onto a transfer-on-death deed, designating a grantee beneficiary in the property. If the owner dies, the deed is transferred to the designee.



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Significant Property Tax Relief

HB 581 AND HR 1022 - Property and Sales Tax Reform (Rep. Shaw Blackmon - 146th) *Effective January 1, 2025.*

- HR 1022 - Enabling Legislation - Constitutional amendment authorizing statewide homestead "locking" mechanism

MAJOR COMPONENTS:

- Property Tax Procedural Reform
- Statewide Floating Homestead Exemption
- New Local Option Sales Tax



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1. Property Tax Procedural Reform

Removes estimate of current tax based on last year's millage rates. The assessment notice will include the current year's "estimated roll-back rate," calculated and provided by the local government. Notice required if the estimated roll back rate is then exceeded

2. Statewide Floating Homestead Exemption

Establishes a statewide "floating homestead" exemption based on a rate of inflation as determined by DOR. Requires approval via local referendum; the exemption allows assessment on homesteaded properties to only rise annually at the rate of inflation, valuation resets upon sale or substantial improvement; local governments may OPT OUT.

3. New Local Option Sales Tax

If all local governments within the county agree to the exemption (do not OPT OUT), they can bring to ballot a "FLOST"– new Local Option Sales Tax that acts similarly to the current LOST and is to be used to reduce property taxes. Only continues for five years with Local Act renewal option. Distribution by IGA with county and 50% municipal population and absentee protection.



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BILLS THAT FAILED

- HB 146 - Expand the Municipal Option Sales Tax (cities in multiple counties)
- HB 170 - Sales Tax Holiday on Firearms and Accessories
- HB 719 - Housing: Local Governments Allowed to Impose Rent Controls
- HB 1043 - Bitcoin Mining Operation Free-for-All: Preempt Local Government Ordinances
- HB 1044 - Public Works Bid Threshold: Increase from \$100,000 to \$250,000
- HB 1121 - Short Term Rentals: Preempt Local Government Regulations
- HB 1210 - Housing: DCA to Create a Multi-family Database
- HB 1228 - County Procurement: Mandate Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) Process
- HB 1253 - Special Rural Districts - Counties Consolidated Services
- HB 1294 - Authorize GEFA to Finance Natural Gas Facilities
- At least 5 bills to restrict speed detection cameras in school zones.



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Best Advocates for LOCAL Government



Carl Vinson
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QUESTIONS

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