



2026 Legislative Update

Georgia Association of Zoning Administrators

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◆ ACCG + GMA Governmental Affairs Team



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◆ Major 2026 Session Themes

Affordability

Eliminate or Reduce Property, Sales, Income and IPT Taxes

Data Centers

Sales Tax Breaks, Energy, Water, Disclosure, and Permitting Moratoriums

Housing

Preemptions, Zoning Moratoriums, Permitting, Institutional Investors

Campaigning for 2026 Elections

Politically charged issues to encourage party bases to come out and vote in November — or not come out to vote

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◆ Transportation

HB 328 – Transit SPLOST Referendums

- Prohibit fees from funding free or reduced transit fares
- Imposes 8-year wait to resubmit a Transit SPLOST after a referendum failure

HB 1434 – Airport Affected Areas

- Airport sponsors designate affected areas and notify relevant local governments by Jan. 1, 2027
- Limits building heights and natural growth within designated airport-affected areas consistent with federal FAA standards
- Local governments that fail to comply will be suspended from LMIG funding eligibility for up to three years

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◆ Transportation

HB 1277 – Environmental Threshold Increased

- Increases the project cost threshold for environmental review evaluations for public road and airport projects from \$100 million to \$200 million
- Connects the threshold value to the cost of inflation
- Delays, until January 1, 2028, the implementation of a new regulatory and taxation scheme for commercial electric vehicle charging through the Department of Agriculture

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◆ General City/County Government

HB 295 – Property Owner Compensation Requirement

- Requires local governments to compensate property owners for actions that negatively impact their property value
- Waives local government sovereign immunity
- Conditions include noncompliance with immigration sanctuary policies, as well as failures to enforce prohibitions on illegal camping, loitering, and public intoxication, among others

HB 413 – Preempt Livestock and Owners on Public Roads

- Prohibits local governments from adopting or enforcing any ordinance, rule, regulation, or resolution regulating any livestock or owner located on any private property or public road

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◆ General City/County Government

HB 483 – Enhance Penalties for Assaulting Code Enforcement

- Expands and increases penalties for harming a code enforcement officer within the course and scope of their employment
- Crimes include assault, aggravated assault, battery, and simple battery

HB 1086 – Signage for Light Frame Trusses

- Requires commercial, industrial, and multi-unit residential buildings with light-frame truss systems to post visible signage to alert firefighters and emergency responders







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◆ General City/County Government

SB 587 – Establishes Animal Cruelty Database

- Directs the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council to create a statewide, publicly searchable animal cruelty database
- Primary purpose is to assist animal shelters, animal protection and control agencies, and other organizations and members of the public, in screening prospective owners







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◆ Natural Resources and the Environment

HB 946 – Authorizes Drones for Tracking/Hunting Feral Hogs

- Permits the use of unarmed aircraft to locate and track feral hogs and removes the permit requirement for private property owners to trap feral hogs on their own property, provided the hogs are killed upon capture
- No authorization to weaponize drones to kill the hogs

HB 956 – Expand Use of SWTF Funds

- Authorizes EPD to use monies collected for the Solid Waste Trust Fund to fund the implementation of a solid waste management program
- Areas include permitting, monitoring, regulation or guidance development, inspections, and enforcement







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◆ Natural Resources and the Environment

SB 447 – E&S Permitting

- Requires local issuing authorities to publish clear requirements for a completed application
- Once an application is complete and submitted, local authorities have 45 days to issue or deny the permit
- If denied, local authorities must give a summary explanation with applicable code references
- If the applicant resubmits, the local authority has 14 days to review the new submission
- The 45-day timeframe is tolled for state and federal inspection requirements
- Failure to issue or deny within these timeframes results in a refund of permit fees
- Local governments issuing 250+ building permits/year must establish an online permit tracking system by Jan. 1, 2028

SB 447 Exemption

- Applies to any county where an airport is owned or operated by that county or a local authority, adjacent to 9,000+ acres of property currently or formerly owned by a municipality with no incorporated territory in that county, and any adjacent county

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◆ Natural Resources and the Environment

HR 1008 – Statewide Water Management Plan

- Reduces the number of appointees to regional water councils

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◆ Public Safety and the Courts

HB 651 – School Zone Safety Cameras

- Counties and cities can only receive or renew a state license to employ these devices if a referendum is passed by voters every six years
- Must employ signs with flashing yellow lights when devices are in use
- Can be fined for misuse of these devices or have permits suspended
- Can only ticket those going over 10 mph over the posted speed limit in the school zone

HB 1161 – School Zone Safety Cameras

- Counties and cities must display signs showing drivers' speed, with lights that flash yellow when the device is authorized to issue citations
- Must submit an annual report to the state on revenue generated
- Must justify the need for deploying devices on highways with more than two lanes
- Cannot place devices on a four-lane highway school zone without a crosswalk across those lanes

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◆ Public Safety and the Courts

HR 1243 – NextGen 911 Fund

- Proposed constitutional amendment
- If approved by voters, authorizes the General Assembly to create the “Georgia Next Generation 9-1-1 Fund”
- Monies used exclusively for expansion, maintenance, and operation of 9-1-1 systems statewide, including the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1
- Subsequent legislation will determine dedicated taxes/fees and disbursement to 9-1-1 centers

SB 399 – Mason Sells AED Coordination Act

- Requires all persons and state agencies possessing AEDs to notify 9-1-1 centers of their AED locations
- Communications officers must complete AED telephone-instruction training by Jan. 1, 2028, unless certified in emergency medical dispatch







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◆ Public Safety and the Courts

SB 470 – Prohibit Signal Jammers

- Prohibits the possession, use, operation, manufacture, sale, offer for sale, distribution, or import of signal jammers
- Exempted: devices approved by the FCC for state/county law enforcement and correction agencies to disrupt contraband device communications in correctional facilities, or signals from unmanned aircraft systems







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◆ Revenue and Finance

HB 244 – Extension on County Audits

- Authorizes the state auditor to provide 90-day extensions to counties on annual audits for cause
- Extension may be granted if constitutional officers, public officers/employees, or assigned state officers/employees cause the county's late filing
- Also creates a 3-tier alternative reporting structure for small cities: under \$2.5M expenditures may use a special purpose framework; under \$1M may elect an annual agreed-upon procedures report in lieu of a full audit (still required every 5 years)

HB 1261 – Freeport Exemptions for Electric Utilities

- Authorizes counties to provide a level one freeport exemption for electric utility equipment inventory
- Requires voter approval via referendum; exemption percentage may be set at 20, 40, 60, 80, or 100 percent of inventory value
- Applies only to inventory — not to equipment incorporated into operating generation, distribution, or transmission facilities







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◆ Revenue and Finance

SB 33 – HOME Act of 2026

- Mandates the HB 581 Floating Base Year Homestead Exemption statewide
- Allows a new Local Homestead Option Sales Tax (LHOST) as an alternative to FLOST to provide property tax relief
- Relief applies only to homesteaded properties, until no homestead property tax exists — then applies to all properties

SB 384 – Five-Year Renewal of Vehicle Registration

- Allows a vehicle owner to renew registration for five years, paying a fee five times the current annual amount
- Owner must still complete annual emissions inspections where required; DOR will notify owners electronically of noncompliance







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◆ 2026 Special Legislative Session

- Governor's Proclamation Authorized
- Redistricting for State and Federal Offices
- Local Acts on LHOST Referendums
- Address the QR Code Removal from Election Ballots
- Redistricting?
- House and Senate GOP Press Conference – A No Go!







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◆ 2026 Special Legislative Session

LHOST

- Created by SB 33
- Homestead exemption funded by 1% LHOST sales tax
- 98 local acts introduced — requires a 2/3 vote to pass
- All 98 local acts failed

QR Code Removal

- Extended deadline from July 1, 2026 to Jan. 1, 2028
- Establishes study committee for new voting machines in 2028
- Hand-marked paper ballots under discussion
- Reasonable solution passed: hand count only the top 2 races if leading candidates are within a 0.5% margin







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◆ Significant Study Committees

- House Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Transportation Infrastructure and Vehicle Regulation
- House Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Local Government Taxation, Funding, and Budgeting







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◆ Bills that Failed to Pass

• HB 317 – Allow Workforce and Residential Infrastructure Districts	• SB 437 – Private Third-Party Inspectors and Virtual Inspections
• HB 583 – Require Counties to Wait 8 Years to Resubmit a Failed Transit SPLOST to Voters	• HB 1385 and HB 1442 – Permit and Zoning Moratoria Limitations
• HR 1608 – Study Committee on City Franchise Fees	• SB 514 – Limit Local Sales Tax Referendums to November in Even-Numbered Years
• HB 377 and SB 51 – QBS Procurement Mandate	• HB 211 – PFAS Receiver Shield Act
• HB 400 – The CHOICE Act	• HB 812 – Land Disturbance Permitting Limitations
• HB 1166 – Zoning Preemption on ADUs – Authorize 400 Sq. Ft. Dwellings	• HB 1212 – PFAS Removal and Remediation Promotion Act







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◆ Bills that Failed to Pass

- HB 1501 – EPD Must Maintain Website for Monitoring PFAS Levels in Public Water Systems
- SB 538 – Industrial PFAS Discharge Reporting to Public Water Utilities
- SB 577 – Removes Local Government Ability to Sue Over PFAS Contamination
- HB 186 and SB 410 – Ends Datacenters' State and Local Sales Tax Breaks
- SR 668 – Constitutional Amendment to Establish Datacenters as a Separate Class of Property
- HB 1116 and HR 1114 – Eliminate Property Tax on Homestead Properties/Cap Local Government Revenue
- SB 584 – Prohibit Certain Class Action Lawsuits Against Counties and Municipalities







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