

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 25, 2017

TO: ARC Board of Commissioners

FROM: Scott Haggard, Government Affairs Manager
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The 2017 session of the Georgia General Assembly began on Monday, January 9th for its 40-day session, and has completed 6 business days. Legislators have adopted a calendar through February 2nd, meeting four days this week and four days next. Leaders have announced that “Crossover Day,” the legislative day by which any bill must have passed at least one chamber to remain alive, will be advanced this year to the 28th legislative day rather than the 30th to allow more time for consideration of important bills.

New Committee Chairs:

Both the Senate and House have new Transportation Committee Chairs for 2017-18. Sen. Brandon Beach (R-Alpharetta) takes the helm of the Committee in the Senate, replacing Tommie Williams, who retired. In the House, former Chair Christian Coomer (R-Cartersville) was elected to leadership as Majority Whip, and will be replaced by Rep. Kevin Tanner (R-Dawsonville). ARC has already developed good relationships with all these members.

In addition, Speaker Ralston announced the creation of a new Subcommittee of Appropriations dedicated specifically to Transportation, Transit and Infrastructure, an important step in elevating these issues in the House. The new chair of this subcommittee is Rep. Jason Shaw (R-Lakeland), son of former Rep. and GDOT Board Chair Jay Shaw.

On other committees, Rep. Lynn Smith (R-Newnan) and Sen. Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville) retain jurisdiction over natural resources and water-related legislation. Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford) and Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta) retain chairmanships related to health/human services and aging programs. Other committees with some nexus to ARC also retained the same leadership.

State Budget:

State revenues continue to be on an upward trend. Gov. Deal’s proposed FY 2018 budget contains a revenue estimate of \$24.5 billion, with a budget of \$21.5 billion. Contained within the Governor’s budget proposal is \$10 million to GRTA/SRTA to rehabilitate 32 Xpress buses and purchase 12 new buses. Gov. Deal has also proposed \$4.2 million to the Department of Human Services for home and community-based services, which would remove 1,000 people from the waiting lists for such services. Finally, he has also proposed funding for an additional 11 adult protective services supervisors. These funds are on top of funds received in FY 2016 and 2017 for the same purposes, reflecting a commitment to these programs.



Potential Transit-Related Commissions and Study Committees:

Both Speaker Ralston, in his Georgia Chamber Eggs & Issues speech, and Senate Majority Whip Steve Gooch have announced plans to introduce legislation in their respective chambers that will pave the way for an intensive 2017 study process in the area of transit governance and funding, with the potential for major legislation in 2018. Neither bill has been introduced as of yet, but ARC is closely involved in discussions with both leaders on this issue.

SB 12: Allow Dental Cleanings in Long Term Care Settings/ Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford)

This bill, similar to legislation that progressed in 2016, would allow dental hygienists to provide cleanings in long term care settings, such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities, under the direction of a dentist but without a dentist being present. It has been introduced early this year, and is a priority of both Health and Human Services Committee Chairs.

Please let me know if you have any questions about these or any other legislative matters.

