

## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 19, 2018

**TO:** ARC Board of Commissioners

**FROM:** Scott Haggard, Government Affairs Manager  
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The Georgia General Assembly has completed 22 days of its 40-day session, and is scheduled to be in session every day through next Monday (Day 27), with “Crossover Day,” or the day by which legislation must pass one chamber in order to remain alive, scheduled for Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. “Sine Die” (Day 40) is scheduled for Thursday, March 29<sup>th</sup>.

Below is a status of the bills and resolutions ARC is monitoring or working this session.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

***HB 930 and SB 386: “ATL” Transit Governance and Funding Bills/ Rep. Kevin Tanner (R-Dawsonville) and Sen. Brandon Beach (R-Alpharetta)***

ARC has been working closely with the authors of both of these bills before and during session, as these represent the most significant advances in transit legislation in some time. Both of these bills create a new transit governance framework for the Atlanta region’s transit operators, under the name “ATL,” or Atlanta-region Transit Link.

The Senate bill, which was introduced on February 5<sup>th</sup>, creates the new agency within GRTA. Its Board of Directors would be composed primarily of local elected officials and agency heads, requires MARTA to be the transit operator region-wide, and allows for counties to join the ATL by implementing a local 1% sales tax to be levied for transit purposes.

The House bill, which was introduced on February 13<sup>th</sup>, includes a different governance framework made up of non-elected official representatives from 10 separate districts around the 13-county region, as well as the Governor (the chair), and appointees by the Lt. Governor and House Speaker. The new ATL authority would take the place of GRTA, including many of its statutory powers, and allow for counties within its jurisdiction to bring about transit expansion through the implementation of a new sales tax for up to 30 years. Special provisions are included for Cobb County to implement transit by referendum in a “special district” centered around the Cumberland CID area, and for Fulton County to have a referendum dedicating an additional fractional sales tax for transit purposes.

In the House bill, the new ATL is charged with developing a regional transit plan, and would be required to coordinate with ARC to consider needs and movement of regional populations and integrate into economic development and other regional priorities. The ATL will allocate new state funding, in the form of a 50-cent fee on ride share services such as Uber and Lyft and a one-cent sales tax on goods and services at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport. The ATL will also oversee allocation of new federal, local, and private funding to regional transit priorities, and create a unified brand to encompass all transit service providers (including MARTA) within the 13 counties.

Both bills remain under extensive revision as the authors dialogue with other legislators and stakeholders. On Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, both bills will be heard for the second time in each of their respective committees, and substitute versions are expected to be introduced there.

***HB 150: Extending Sunset of Using CPI in Motor Fuel Tax Rate/ Rep. Alan Powell (R-Hartwell)***

HB 170, the "Transportation Funding Act of 2015," revised the state motor fuel tax formula to include the consumer price index to keep up with material and labor cost inflation. The provision requiring inclusion of the CPI had been set to expire on July 1, 2018. This bill extends that sunset for four years to July 1, 2022. The bill has passed both the House and Senate, and awaits the Governor's signature.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

***HB 919: WaterSense and Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday/ Rep. Sam Watson (R-Moultrie)***

This bill would reinstate the WaterSense and Energy Star sales tax holidays, which had occurred on an annual basis until they were discontinued last year. Products with either of these labels (with a purchase price of less than \$1,500) would be exempt from sales tax for one weekend in the fall, which promotes the adoption of water-efficient products. The bill was introduced on February 12<sup>th</sup> and has been assigned to the House Ways & Means Committee.

***HB 332/HR 238: Outdoor Stewardship Act/ Rep. Sam Watson (R-Moultrie)***

This bill and associated constitutional amendment (which would require approval by voters in November 2018) would dedicate 75% of all tax revenue collected annually from the sale of outdoor recreation equipment for the purpose of protecting and preserving conservation land. It would provide for the acquisition of critical areas for the provision or protection of clean water, game, wildlife, or fisheries, or natural-resource-based outdoor recreation, and also aid local governments in the acquisition and improvement of local parks and trails. A coalition of conservation organizations is supporting the legislation. Both pieces of legislation must pass for the measure to appear on the ballot in November. HR 238 was approved by the House Ways & Means Committee on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **AGING SERVICES**

### ***HB 635: Disabled Adults and Elder Protection Act/ Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta)***

This bill encourages the creation of coordinating teams comprised of law enforcement, prosecutors, health care services agencies, and non-profit organizations, modeled on similar efforts in Augusta which resulted in increased prosecution of elder abuse in the area. The Georgia Council on Aging testified in support in the House Human Relations & Aging Committee, and it passed the House 158-0 on Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>. It is now available for the Senate.

### ***HB 803: Criminalizes Trafficking of Disabled Adults and Elders for Benefits/ Rep. Wendell Willard (R-Sandy Springs)***

This bill, supported by the Georgia Council on Aging, criminalizes the increasingly common practice of operators of unlicensed personal care homes warehousing disabled adults and the elderly to take their Social Security and/or EBT cards. The bill has been referred to the House Judiciary (Non-Civil) Committee.

### ***SB 406: Creating an Abuser Registry/ Sen. Brian Strickland (R- McDonough)***

This bill will create the Georgia Long-term Care Background Check Program. Only a small portion of elder abuse crimes committed are reported, and since 2010, reports of elder abuse have increased 550%. The Governor's budget included funding for the Department of Community Health to implement a fingerprint background check system for employees providing long-term care. This system will be used to build a database of employees eligible to provide care, and would help prevent the hiring of caregivers with a known history of abusing elder adults. The bill was introduced on February 12<sup>th</sup> and has been referred to the Senate Public Safety Committee.

### ***SB 444: GA Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan Advisory Council/ Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford)***

This bill will create the Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan Advisory Council, to ensure that focus remains on implementing the goals in the Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan. The Council would include representatives from state agencies, the General Assembly, the Alzheimer's Association, the Georgia Council on Aging, and individuals in the medical and non-profit fields. The bill has not yet been referred to a committee, having been introduced on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### ***SB 2: The FAST Act/ Sen. Mike Dugan (R-Carrollton)***

*(Info per ACCG):* This legislation mandates that cities and counties which charge any regulatory fees (license or permit fees), or have any regulatory requirements, to establish a schedule of

such fees and requirements which shall include timelines necessary for processing completed applications and a list of all documentation needed by applicants to meet regulatory requirements. Also, DCA shall establish a voluntary “Ready for Partnership” certification program for each city and county in Georgia. Local governments may apply to receive RFP certification, which will be based on the aforementioned metrics in processing licenses and permits. The bill passed the Senate in 2017 unanimously, and was approved by the House Small Business Development Committee on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

***HB 59: Tax Credits for Historic Structures/ Rep. Ron Stephens (R-Savannah)***

HB 59 changes the income tax credit for rehabilitation of historic structures. Specifically, this bill would remove the current maximum amount (\$5 million) of the tax credit in any year for a certified historic structure. The bill would also make such tax credits freely transferrable to other parties. The bill passed the House by a vote of 139-27 in 2017, and is available for Senate consideration.

**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS**

***HB 810: Allowing Workforce Boards to Meet by Teleconference/ Rep. Tom McCall (R-Elberton)***

This bill would allow workforce boards across Georgia to hold meetings by teleconference in order to meet the requirements of obtaining a quorum. The bill is supported by the Workforce boards throughout the state. It is limited to these boards only. The bill was approved by the House Governmental Affairs Committee on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

**REGIONAL COMMISSIONS**

***HB 833: Changing Requirements for Land Surveyors/ Rep. Paulette Rakestraw (R-Hiram)***

This legislation results from negotiations with ACCG and other stakeholders and changes several provisions relating to professional land surveyors. Surveyors’ training hours are increased, but they no longer have to take five semester hours of training in hydrology. Three semester hours of hydrology, and passage of a hydrology exam, are required if a surveyor seeks licensure to design storm water management plans, facilities, water distribution lines, or sanitary sewer collection systems. Lastly, officers and employees of local governments or authorities engaged in gathering, processing, managing and sharing of geospatial and photogrammetric data for cataloging or mapping purposes are not required to be licensed surveyors. The bill passed the House Regulated Industries Committee on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

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