



Final Legislative Report

Volume #16, Issue 15 – May 19, 2025

2025 Session of the General Assembly

The 2025 legislative session of the General Assembly adjourned on Friday, April 4. Despite the challenges and sheer amount of legislation impacting county government this session, Georgia counties achieved several successes, including passage of key ACCG Policy Agenda items such as HB 92 (cleanup of HB 581 from the 2024 session), Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) implementation, additional road funding through Local Road Assistance (LRA) that does not require a local match, annexation arbitration revisions, increasing the public works bidding threshold, authorizing digital court reporting, and regulating temporary vehicle tags to ensure TAVT (Title Ad Valorem Tax) is collected.

This 2025 Final Legislative Report includes summaries of legislation that passed and their effective dates, a list of bills that did not pass, a summary of key appropriations in the amended FY 2025 budget and the new FY 2026 budget and approved legislative study committees of interest to counties. Legislation likely to have a budgetary impact is identified by an asterisk in front of the bill number.

ACCG sincerely thanks all commissioners, county legislative coordinators (CLC's), and county staff who supported the Association's Policy Agenda this year by meeting with legislators and making personal contact through phone calls, text messages, and emails. A special thank you to this year's Policy Council for their hard work and dedication. County officials serve as the critical component of ACCG's legislative advocacy efforts. Your involvement was instrumental in helping ACCG staff stop or modify several bills that would have been detrimental to Georgia's county governments.

Bills Passed

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION

[Staff: Dante Handel]

HB 14 – Creates Georgia Music Office (Rep. Kasey Carpenter, 4th) *Effective July 1, 2025, subject to appropriations.* This legislation establishes the Georgia Music Office within the Department of Economic Development, subject to state appropriations. The Office would certify cities and counties as Music Friendly Georgia Certified Communities, which would then be required to host a Music Friendly Georgia workshop to educate local leaders and stakeholders on the office's functions. These communities must then form an advisory board of local music industry stakeholders to promote music-related economic development in their communities and appoint a Music Friendly Georgia Certified Liaison.

HB 164 – Repeals Sunset on Increased Truck Weight Limits (Rep. Steven Meeks, 178th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation repeals the sunset on the increased truck weight limits from HB 189 (2023), allowing agricultural products to be hauled at 88,000 pounds (80,000 pounds with a 10% variance) outside the Metro Atlanta “non-attainment area.” This includes counties previously designated as “non-attainment areas” under the federal Clean Air Act and served by the Atlanta-region Transit Link “ATL” Authority –

which includes the following counties: Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale.

HB 495 – Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation (Rep. Robert Dickey, 134th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This bill transfers Georgia's Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation from the University System of Georgia to the Department of Agriculture.

HB 652 – Extends Implementation Date for Department of Agriculture to Regulate Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (Rep. Todd Jones, 25th) *Section 1 effective May 14, 2025. All other sections effective January 1, 2027.* This legislation extends the implementation date for the Department of Agriculture to regulate electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to January 1, 2027. This will delay the new system of taxation for EV charging stations proposed under **SB 146** (2023) until 2027.

GENERAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT

[Staff: Kaylon Day and Todd Edwards]

HB 58 – Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Entertainment Events (Rep. Gary Richardson, 125th) *Effective April 1, 2025.* This legislation prohibits operating an unmanned aircraft system within 400 feet of a ticketed entertainment event. Violators face misdemeanor charges. Exceptions apply to those with consent from legal authorities; those authorized by federal regulations operating lawfully; employees conducting official business for the property; employees of regulated utility providers conducting official business; or property owners operating their own unmanned aircraft systems above their property, following federal regulations and not for commercial purposes or interfering with the event.

***HB 137 – Public Works Bidding Threshold** (Rep. Victor Anderson, 10th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation raises the public works bidding threshold from \$100,000 to \$250,000. For road projects, the threshold is being raised from \$200,000 to \$250,000. This bill is a 2025 ACCG Policy Agenda item.

HB 155 – Annexation Arbitration Process Revisions (Rep. Victor Anderson, 10th) *Effective on various dates.* This legislation helps the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) fill annexation arbitration panels to hear annexation objections filed by Georgia's counties (*effective Jan. 1, 2026*). It also further limits the ability of cities to utilize the method

of “spoke” annexations (*effective July 1, 2025*); makes several changes to processes for zoning-related matters and appeals (*applicable to all zoning and quasi-judicial decisions occurring on and after July 1, 2025*); and limits the jurisdiction of the Fulton County Development Authority (*effective Jan. 1, 2026*).

HB 331 – Prohibition of Roadside Animal Sales

(Rep. Beth Camp, 135th) *Effective July 1, 2025.*

This legislation prohibits transferring animal ownership at any roadside, public right of way, park, or similar outdoor location, with exceptions. Violators will be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine.

HB 399 – In-State Staff Requirements for Landlords

(Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver, 84th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation requires any landlord who is not a resident of Georgia and owns or operates single-family or duplex rental properties to employ a licensed broker. If the broker is not a resident, they must hire someone located in the state to handle tenant communications regarding maintenance and other issues. The bill also stipulates that if there is probable cause to believe a code violation has occurred, the tenant must provide the property manager's name, license number, and contact information upon the request of a code enforcement officer.

HB 426 – Nonpartisan Elections of Probate & Magistrate Judges

(Rep. Kimberly New, 40th) *Effective July 1, 2025. Section 4 is effective January 1, 2027, contingent on the passage of a constitutional amendment (HR 251).*

This legislation establishes non-partisan elections for the offices of probate court judge, chief magistrate, or magistrate. Starting July 1, 2025, no local Act permitting the partisan election of a chief magistrate or other magistrate shall be enacted or enforced. HR 251 contains the constitutional amendment necessary to fulfill HB 426's legislative intent. However, the resolution did not pass this session.

***HB 513 – SDS Revisions** (Rep. John LaHood, 175th) *Effective on various dates.* This legislation revises the Service Delivery Strategies (SDS) Act. It adds to the list of unincorporated revenue sources that can be used for unincorporated services; clarifies that any or all of the

listed sources can be used for unincorporated services (not just one source); and requires future SDS agreements to include a requirement for counties to provide an annual report of their unincorporated revenues to SDS participants (*effective January 1, 2026*). It also allows cities and counties that have adopted ordinances requiring gas stations to have video surveillance equipment prior to May 6, 2024, to keep those ordinances. No cities or counties can adopt such ordinances after that date due to the passage of legislation in 2024 (*effective July 1, 2025*).

HB 516 – Authorization for Some Members of Library Board or Community Service Board to Participate in Meetings via Teleconference

(Rep. Kimberly New, 40th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation requires that meetings of the Board of Trustees for county or regional public libraries and Community Service Boards be held at a physical location, with at least 50 percent of board members present. The remaining half of the board members may participate remotely, as long as the requisite number of members are present in person at the physical meeting. Both boards must also provide methods for the public to view and comment on these meetings remotely.

HB 614 – Authorizes Local Ordinances Limiting

Fireworks (Rep. Jan Jones, 47th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation allows local governments to adopt ordinances prohibiting the use of fireworks within 100 yards of a commercial facility housing horses. The ordinance may include provisions allowing fireworks use within this boundary with the approval of a special event permit.

SB 12 – Open Records Exclusions for Private Entities

(Sen. Frank Ginn, 47th) *Effective May 14, 2025.* This legislation refines the definition of “custodian”/“lawful custodian” in the context of open records requests. This change provides that a custodian is an agency that has charge, custody, care, and control over a public record or an employee of that agency. As a result, open records requests must be directed only to custodians, excluding private individuals or entities from fulfilling such requests.

SB 16 – Allows Commissioners to Act as Bail Bondsmen

(Sen. Matt Brass, 6th) *Effective February 25, 2025.*

This legislation allows county commissioners and city council members to be directly or indirectly involved with any bail bond business. However, the official cannot issue bonds within the jurisdiction where they hold office.

SB 36 – Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act

(Sen. Ed Setzler, 36th) *Effective April 4, 2025.* The legislation provides that the government may only substantially burden a person's exercise of religion if there is a compelling government interest. If this interest exists, the government must act in the least restrictive manner. The bill provides that if a person's religious exercise has been wrongly burdened, they may assert the violation as a claim or defense in a judicial proceeding.

***SB 68 – Governor's Tort Reform Package** (Sen. John F. Kennedy, 18th) *Effective April 21, 2025.* Among its measures, this bill:

- Allows a jury to know whether the plaintiff wore their seatbelt in an auto accident.
- Limits damages for medical expenses to the reasonable value of medically necessary treatment.
- Eliminates double recovery of attorney's fees, unless specifically authorized by statute(s).
- Limits the timeframe for plaintiffs to move to voluntarily dismiss a case with the intent of filing it again later.
- Limits property owners' liability for injuries arising from third-party bad actors that occur on their property, with an exemption for sex trafficking.

SB 69 – Tort Reform: Regulate Third-Party

Financing (Sen. John F. Kennedy, 18th) *Sections 1-2, effective January 1, 2026; Sections 3-4 effective April 21, 2025.* This legislation regulates third-party litigation financing practices in this state, including the registration of litigation financiers with the Georgia Department of Banking and Finance.

SB 125 – Electrical & Plumbing Contractor

Qualifications Revision (Sen. Larry Walker, 20th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation revises the licensing conditions for low-voltage contractors, journeyman/master plumbers, utility contractors, and conditioned air contractors, as well as the conditions of their work if unlicensed. The bill also revises the make up of the State Construction Industry Licensing Board, among other related industry boards.

SB 138 – New City Mandates Create Dangerous SDS and Sovereign Immunity Precedent

(Sen. Clint Dixon, 45th) *Effective May 14, 2025.* While this bill is specific to Gwinnett County and its relations with the City of Mulberry, it is a general bill and could apply in the future to any county. It mandates several SDS responsibilities to the county and, if the county fails to meet them, the county's sovereign immunity, and the governmental immunity of all its officials, is waived in "all" matters for one year. In other words, the county would be exposed to lawsuits and liability for matters wholly unrelated to the dispute between the county and municipality.

SB 199 – Elections: State Ethics Commission Revisions to Candidate Qualifying & Disclosures

(Sen. Sam Watson, 11th) *Effective January 1, 2026.* This legislation updates the requirements for candidate qualifications and financial disclosures. It requires candidates for municipal and county elections to register directly with the State Ethics Commission instead of at the local level. Newly elected county officials are currently required to complete training. This bill requires candidates to acknowledge this training obligation when they qualify to run for office.

SB 298 – Immunities: Right of Direct Appeal from Trial Court Denial

(Sen. Randy Robertson, 29th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This bill allows counties and other governments to automatically appeal to the Court of Appeals or Supreme Court when a Superior Court denies the government's request to dismiss a lawsuit on immunity grounds (sovereign immunity, official immunity, etc.). Under prior law, the government was required to receive permission to appeal from both the superior court and the appellate court in that situation.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

[Staff: Doug Reineke]

HB 398 – Cottage Food Items (Rep. Leesa Hagan, 156th) *Effective July 1, 2025*. This legislation authorizes the production and sale of cottage food items with specific exemptions, requirements, and disclosures. It defines cottage food items as non-potentially hazardous foods made in a home kitchen, such as baked goods, jams, dried fruits, and popcorn, while excluding items like raw milk and cannabis-infused products. The bill outlines labeling and disclosure requirements, mandates signage at retail locations, and allows online and third-party sales with proper labeling. It grants enforcement authority to the Department of Agriculture, including inspections in response to consumer complaints or health concerns. Violations may result in written warnings and fines up to \$75. Additionally, the bill prohibits local governments from imposing regulations on cottage food items but allows them to ban third-party sales through formal ordinances.

SB 58 – "Georgia Transporting Life-Saving Organs and Personnel Act" (Sen. John Albers, 56th) *Effective May 9, 2025*. This legislation regulates and facilitates the operation of emergency organ transport vehicles. It classifies these vehicles under ambulance services, requiring them to comply with Department of Public Health regulations while exempting them from the Emergency Medical Systems Communications (EMSC) Program and the requirement for a medical adviser. The Act grants emergency organ transport vehicles the same operational privileges as ambulances, allowing them to operate as emergency vehicles on public roadways. It mandates insurance coverage similar to that required for ambulances and revises legal definitions to formally recognize these vehicles.

SB 132 – Insanity and Mental Incapacity Evaluations (Sen. Brian Strickland, 42nd) *Effective July 1, 2025*. This bill amends Georgia code dealing with mental competency evaluations for accused individuals. It requires a hearing before a court orders an evaluation to determine if an accused person is competent to stand trial. The bill also requires the release of competency evaluation reports to both the defense and prosecution, with certain restrictions. Additionally, it establishes different procedures for cases involving only nonviolent misdemeanor offenses, including automatic dismissal in some instances. The bill outlines timeframes for evaluations and treatment, allowing for outpatient care in some cases and setting limits on detention for competency restoration.

SB 233 – Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission (Sen. Matt Brass, 8th) *Effective May 14, 2025*. This legislation amends the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission by expanding its composition, revising its subcommittees, and extending its repeal date. The Commission will grow from 24 to 30 members, incorporating new representatives. The bill also restructures the Commission's subcommittees, adding a specific focus on intellectual and developmental disabilities. Additionally, it extends the Commission's automatic repeal date from June 30 to December 31, 2026.

NATURAL RESOURCES & THE ENVIRONMENT

[Staff: Todd Edwards]

HB 351 - Landfills – Revise Local Government Permitting Process

(Rep. John Corbett, 174th) *Effective Jan. 1, 2026*. The legislation revises the Georgia Solid Waste Management Act's provisions relating to a local government's landfill permitting process. Among its measures, it:

- Removes provisions courts have determined to be unconstitutional or unenforceable,
- Resolves inconsistencies between different provisions of the Act,
- Clarifies for local governments their roles and responsibilities in permitting and clarifies for the public their opportunities to participate in these local government processes,
- Specifies EPD's responsibilities for reviewing local government approvals and verifications, and
- Provides for greater finality in permitting decisions.

HB 532 – State Forestry Commission Grant

Disbursement (Rep. Buddy DeLoach, 167th) *Effective July 1, 2025*. This legislation revises the State Forestry Commission's grant distribution to counties that have more than 20,000, acres of unimproved real property owned and maintained by the Department of Natural Resources.

SB 13 – Authorize GEFA to Finance Gas Projects

(Sen. Carden Summers) *Effective May 14, 2025*. This bill grants the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) the authority to provide financing and oversight of projects related to natural gas for cities and counties across the state. This financing could be used for the purposes of storing, supplying, and distributing natural gas.

PUBLIC SAFETY & THE COURTS

[Staff: Doug Reineke]

*HB 85 – Superior Court Judicial Compensation Reform

(Rep. Rob Leverett, 123rd) *Effective July 1, 2025*.

This legislation revises the salary structure and compensation rules for Superior Court judges and introduces the concept of locality pay as an alternative to county salary supplements. Beginning July 1, 2025, Superior Court judges' salaries paid by state funds will be set by the General Assembly through the appropriations process, rather than using a fixed number in statute. Superior Court judges in office as of such date will have options for how they receive their county supplements and benefits, but new Superior Court judges will be limited to receiving a new form of locality pay instead of county supplements, which is optional at the local level and limited to the lesser of 10% of their state pay or \$20,106. Critically, the indirect effects of HB 85 on local laws which base the salaries of local officials upon the salary payable to Superior Court judges are mitigated within the legislation. Any provision of local law that would be triggered by an increase in Superior Court judges' pay caused by HB 85 is suspended indefinitely for all local officials; provided, however, for judges other than Superior Court judges, such effects are only suspended

until July 1, 2026. During the periods of suspension, the General Assembly may revise local laws to address the impacts of HB 85 on local officials' salaries. Local governments will be required to continue providing certain employment benefits for existing judges and may generally provide such benefits to new judges.

HB 179 – Digital Recording Court Reporting

(Rep. Tyler Paul Smith, 18th) *Effective January 1, 2026*. This legislation allows for the digital recording of certain court proceedings as an alternative to traditional court reporting. For felony trials, certain felony evidentiary hearings, and death penalty cases, transcripts must still be prepared by a court reporter. However, other felony matters, as well as misdemeanor, civil, and Georgia State-wide Business Court proceedings, judges may authorize approved digital recording systems, depending on the nature of the case and established court rules adopted by the Supreme Court. The measure extends to State Courts, Superior Courts, city courts, grand jury proceedings, and the Georgia State-wide Business Court, providing judges with flexibility in how records are maintained.

HB 199 – Protection of Personal Information of Judges and Their Spouses (Rep. Trey Kelley, 16th)

Effective July 1, 2025. This legislation enhances protections for the personally identifiable information of judges and their spouses. It eliminates the requirement for the Administrative Office of the Courts to maintain a database of protected individuals and their information. Instead, it establishes a statewide form for protected persons to request the removal or redaction of their personal information from public records. State and local governments will be required to comply with such requests following specified procedures.

HB 423 – Next Generation 9-1-1 Implementation and Oversight (Rep. Will Wade, 9th) *Effective July 1, 2025.*

This legislation begins the process to modernize the state's 9-1-1 system by implementing Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) services. It revises definitions and updates the responsibilities of the Georgia Emergency Communications Authority to oversee and enforce standards for a statewide NG9-1-1 network. It requires all new 9-1-1 systems conform to wireless enhanced 9-1-1 or NG9-1-1 standards, ensuring interoperability, security, and efficiency. It also expands the Authority's board of directors to include cybersecurity and geographic information systems (GIS) experts. Additionally, the bill grants the Authority new powers, such as managing grant applications, monitoring system performance, coordinating training, and promoting emergency response interoperability. The role of the executive director is also updated, designating them as the state 9-1-1 administrator with authority over staffing and operational decisions. The bill enhances the effectiveness, security, and coordination of Georgia's emergency response system through modern technology and expanded governance.

SB 99 – Updates Definition of Law Enforcement Officer (Sen. Randy Robertson, 29th) *Effective May 13, 2025.*

This legislation adds additional definitions for "law enforcement officer." The definition includes peace officers, state or federal law enforcement personnel assisting Georgia agencies during a declared state of emergency, and appointed chiefs of police or department heads who have not yet completed required training. It also covers elected sheriffs who have not yet obtained peace officer certification and federal law enforcement officers who are full-time, in good standing, authorized to carry firearms, and have arrest powers under U.S. law.

SB 244 – DA Disqualification: Attorney's Fees and Costs (Sen. Brandon Beach, 21st) *Effective July 1, 2025.*

This legislation allows defendants in criminal cases the right to recover reasonable attorney's fees and costs if they successfully move to disqualify a prosecuting attorney due to misconduct. If the disqualification leads to the dismissal of the case, the defendant is entitled to recover all legal costs incurred in their defense. If the case proceeds despite the prosecuting attorney's disqualification, the defendant can still recover fees and costs specifically related to the disqualification motion. To receive reimbursement, the defendant must file a motion after the conclusion of the criminal case, and the presiding judge will determine the appropriate award. The awarded attorney's fees and costs will be paid from the funds of the office of the prosecuting attorney as budgeted by the county or counties comprising the judicial circuit of such prosecuting attorney.

REVENUE & FINANCE

[Staff: Dante Handel]

***HB 90 – Increases CUVA Acreage Limit to 4,000 Acres** (Rep. Chuck Efstration, 104th) *Effective January 1, 2027; contingent upon the ratification of the constitutional amendment during the November 2026 statewide referendum.* This legislation increases the maximum acreage per person for the Conservation Use Valuation Assessment program (CUVA) from 2,000 to 4,000 acres.

***HB 92 – HB 581 (2024) Cleanup Bill** (Rep. Shaw Blackmon, 146th) *Effective April 1, 2025, and applicable to taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2025.* This legislation revises multiple provisions from HB 581 (2024), which created the statewide floating homestead exemption.

*Please see [Appendix C](#) for the significant provisions of the legislation.

***HB 129 – Allows CUVA Properties to be Leased to Nonqualifying Entities Without Breach** (Rep. Chas Cannon, 172nd) *Effective May 14, 2025 and applicable to taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2026.* This legislation expands the Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA) program so that properties may be leased to organizations that would not qualify for CUVA without breaching the covenant.

HB 153 – Extends Sunset Date on Sales Tax Exemption for Concrete Mixers by Five Years (Rep. Beth Camp, 135th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation extends the sunset date on the sales and use tax exemption for concrete mixers by five years through June 30, 2031.

HB 156 – Allows Hotel/Motel Tax to be Spent on Air Service Product Expansion (Rep. Todd Jones, 25th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation allows hotel/motel funds to be spent on air service product expansion at air carrier airports. An example would be using these funds to increase the number of flights from a certain airline, or to add additional airlines to the airport.

***HB 223 – Sales Tax Exemption for Replacing Greenhouses, Poultry Sheds, and Livestock Barns; TREES Act: Voluntary Timber Tax Exemption with State Grant Reimbursement** (Rep. James Burchett, 176th) *Effective May 8, 2025.* This legislation creates a sales tax exemption for replacing greenhouses, poultry sheds, and

livestock barns, which becomes effective upon the Governor's signature and expires at the end of 2025. It also authorizes local governments to adopt a resolution to eliminate all property taxes on eligible standing timber levied within disaster areas for the fourth quarter of 2024 and all of 2025. The legislation also establishes a grant program and requires the Department of Revenue to make grants available to the electing jurisdictions subject to certain conditions and to the extent that funds are made available for such purpose through state appropriations.

HB 296 – Special Modified Rental Motor Vehicles Pay Half TAVT Up Front and Half in a Year (Rep. Houston Gaines, 120th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* Among various elections and personal identification provisions, this legislation allows special modified rental motor vehicles to postpone paying half of their Title Ad Valorem (TAVT) taxes for one year.

HB 416 – Enterprise Zones (Rep. Chuck Efstration, 104th) *Effective July 1, 2025.* This legislation revises the class of retailer from which enterprise zone infrastructure fees may be collected and the duration of enterprise zones.

HB 551 – Temporary Vehicle Operating Permit Cleanup to Avoid Non-Payment of TAVT (Rep. Jason Ridley, 6th) *Effective January 1, 2026.*

This legislation closes loopholes concerning temporary operating permits (TOPs) and dealer plates by making the following changes:

- Allows the Department of Revenue (DOR) to create a process for distribution of TOPs stock paper and issuance of TOPs numbers.
- Allows DOR to suspend a dealer's access to printing TOPs.
- Creates a review process for dealers who receive notice their TOPs printing access will be suspended.
- Requires the established place of business for new and used motor vehicle dealers to have at least five motor vehicles for sale on site at all times.
- Allows DOR to share registration, title records, and title ad valorem tax (TAVT) information with the Used Car Board.
- Prohibits dealers from keeping a "double set of books" and imposes a monetary penalty.
- Creates a new TAVT penalty structure for using a passive entity to avoid registration in Georgia of a motor vehicle being driven in the state for 60 days or more.

HB 586 – Intangible Recording Tax is Due on Notes 62 Months Out Instead of 3 Years Out

(Rep. Bruce Williamson, 112th) *Effective July 1, 2025.*

This legislation changes intangible recording tax. Current law provides that the tax is only imposed on notes which last longer than 36 months while HB 586 now exempts notes that are due from 37 months to 62 months from issue.

SB 141 – Allows BOC to Extend Preferential Assessment Period for up to 12 Years for Income-Producing Rehabilitated/Landmark Historic Property

(Sen. Bo Hatchett, 50th) *Effective July 1, 2025.*

This legislation allows a board of commissioners to extend the preferential assessment period for up to 12 years for income-producing rehabilitated or landmark historic properties.

Appendix A

2025 Study Committees

Study Committees Passed this Session Impacting Georgia Counties

- House Study Committee on Funding for Next Generation 9-1-1 ([HR 429](#))
- House Study Committee on the State Board of Registration of Used Motor Vehicle Dealers and Used Motor Vehicle Parts Dealers ([HR 558](#))
- House Study Committee on Improving Access to Internal Medicine in Rural Areas ([HR 753](#))
- House Study Committee on Election Procedures ([HR 885](#))
- Senate Height Restrictions Surrounding Georgia Airports Study Committee ([SR 283](#))
- Senate State FairTax Study Committee ([SR 386](#))
- Senate Study Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Currency ([SR 391](#))
- Senate Study Committee on Franchise Fees ([SR 424](#))

Appendix B

Bills that Failed to Pass in the 2025 Session

The following bills failed to advance in the 2025 session and will be available at the start of the 2026 legislative session, since the General Assembly runs on a two-year cycle.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION

- HB 76 – [Requires Public Hearings for Local Transportation Projects of Significant Impact](#)

GENERAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT

- HB 14 – [Establish Georgia Music Office](#)
- HB 75 – [Court Order Requirement for Euthanizing Unrelinquished Impounded Animals](#)
- HB 147 – [AI Inventory Mandate on Local Governments](#)
- HB 205 – [Drones: Prohibition List](#)
- HB 295 – [Require Local Governments to Compensate Property Owners](#) – Waive Sovereign Immunity
- HB 305 – [Restricts Corporate Interest in Single Family Dwellings](#)
- HB 317 – [Authorize Workforce and Residential Infrastructure Districts](#)
- HB 319 – [Public Employees Subject to Prosecution for Immigration Violations](#)
- HB 346 – [Prohibit Political Use of PEG Channels](#)
- HB 377 and SB 51 – [QBS Mandate for Procuring Professional Services](#)
- HB 374 – [Housing Management Database](#)
- HB 397 and SB 175 – [Elections - Omnibus Bills](#)
- HB 387 – [SDS Growth Boundary Agreement](#)
- HB 400 – [The Community Housing Options Increase Cost Efficiency \(CHOICE\) Act](#)
- HB 413 – [Mobile Sawmills Preemption](#)
- HB 454 and HB 467 – [Provisions for Monument Removal](#)
- HB 483 – [Penalize Librarians for Failure to Remove Harmful Materials to Minors](#)
- HB 502 – [Elections: Preferential Treatment of Voters Accompanied by Children](#)
- HB 521 – [Deannexation Requests by County Governments](#)
- HB 524 – [Elections: Employee Protections for Elected Officials](#)
- HB 555 – [Corporate Investment Limits on Residential Property](#)
- HB 604 – [Elections: Authorize Manual Ballot Recount](#)
- HB 661 – [Elections: Enhances Penalties for Voter Registration Violations](#)
- HB 646 – [Coroner Pay – Mandatory Minimum Salaries Statewide](#)
- HB 728 – [State Election Board Rule Effective Date](#)
- SB 15 – [Elections: Nonpartisan Elections for County Governing Authorizes](#)
- SB 21 and HB 531 – [Waive Sovereign and Governmental Immunities for Immigration Violations](#)
- SB 37 – [AI Usage Plan](#)
- SB 64 – [Unmanned Aircraft Prohibition](#)
- SB 106 and HB 299 – [Allows Local Ordinances to Regulate Private Rental Prices](#)
- SB 117 – [Misdemeanor Offense for Public Employer Retaliation](#)
- SB 189 – [Legal Notices – DCA to Establish Online Posting Site](#)
- SB 204 – [Regulation of Firearms & Weapons: Expanding Waiver of Local Governments' Sovereign Immunity](#)
- SB 214 – [Elections: Authorize In-Person Absentee Voting](#)

- SB 270 – [Elections: Supervised Assistance Voting Events, Public Notice Provisions & State Election Board Rulemaking Revisions](#)
- SB 303 – [Elections: Expand State Election Board Roles/Responsibilities](#)
- SR 131 – [Legalize Gambling/Sports Betting: Counties Receive Funding](#)

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

- HB 291 – [Certification of Community Health Workers and New Board](#)
- HB 170 – [Rural Hospitals – Establish State Grants for Backup Generators](#)

NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

- HB 249 – [Solar Power Facility Agreements Revisions](#)
- HB 320 – [Solar Panels and Facilities Must be Recycled](#)
- HB 449 – [Regulate Private Water System Rates/Water Wells Cannot be Prohibited](#)
- HB 538 – [Data Centers Must Provide Disclosure Reports](#)
- HB 665 – [Transfer Environmental Responsibilities from County Boards of Health to Department of Public Health](#)

PUBLIC SAFETY & THE COURTS

- HB 77 – [Encountering Funeral Procession on Two-lane Highway](#)
- HB 180 – [Requirements for Probate Judges](#)
- HB 246 – [Qualification Requirements for Office of Sheriffs](#)
- HB 209 – [EMS as an Essential Service](#)
- HB 225 – [Repeal of School Zone Speed Cameras](#)
- HB 309 – [Revise Process to Abolish a County Police Department](#)
- HB 535 – [Credit for Time Served Regarding Probation Revocation Sentencing](#)
- HB 549 – [Peace Officers – Extend Time Frame for Which Reimbursement of Total Training Expenses](#)
- HB 578 – [Increase in Monthly 9-1-1 Charge Assessed by Local Governments](#)
- HB 651 – [Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices in School Zone](#)
- SB 17 – [“Ricky and Alyssa’s Law” for New School Safety Measures](#)
- SB 75 – [School Zone Speed Detection Devices](#)
- SB 116 – [Collection of DNA from individual in a detention facility](#)
- SB 243 – [Back the Blue Fund](#)
- SB 285 – [Increase 9-1-1 Fee for Peace Officers’ Annuity and Benefit Fund](#)
- SB 342 – [Increase 9-1-1 Charges for POAB and Firefighters Pension Fund](#)
- SR 282 – [Joint Study Committee on 911 Fee Increase](#)

REVENUE & FINANCE

- HB 52 – [Expand Qualified Disabled Veteran Exemption to be Portable](#)
- HB 66 – [AHOST and Special Modified Rental Motor Vehicles Pay Half TAVT Up Front and Half in a Year](#)
- HB 79 – [Firearm Safe Handling and Secure Storage Tax Credit Act and Sales Tax Exemption for Firearms and Accessories](#)

- HB 134 – [Expand Manufactured Home Sales and Use Tax Exemption to Exempt Local Sales Tax](#)
- HB 168 – [SPLOST Renewals Require a Local Act](#)
- HB 169 – [Repeal Solar Exception to CUVA](#)
- HB 186 – [Eliminate Title Ad Valorem Tax for Inherited Vehicles](#)
- HB 244 – [Audit Extension and Hold Harmless for Counties on Annual Audit if Noncompliance is Due to Constitutional Officers](#)
- HB 260 – [Increase Statewide Homestead Exemption to \\$5,000](#)
- HB 297 – [Exempt Commercial Side-By-Sides from Ad Valorem](#)
- HB 317 and HR 192 – [Authorize Workforce and Residential Infrastructure Districts](#)
- HB 386 – [Sales Tax Holiday for Clothing and School Supplies](#)
- HB 429 – [Exempt All Vehicles Currently under the TAVT System \(Birthday Tax\)](#)
- HB 439 – [Increase Deduction Allowed to Dealers](#)
- HB 445 – [Add Appeal to Hearing Officer for Non-Wireless Personal Property and Expands Pool of Eligible Hearing Officers](#)
- HB 456 – [Restore Estimated Taxes and Allow for Appeals After Tax Bill](#)
- HB 463 – [Ad Valorem Tax; Certain Senior Citizens Who Volunteer with Local Governments; Provide Homestead Exemption](#)
- HB 474 and HB 492 – [Apply Hotel/Motel Tax to Continuous Occupancy After 30 Days](#)
- HB 499 – [Sales Tax Exemption for Menstrual Discharge Collection Devices](#)
- HB 547 – [Allow Multiple CUVA Covenants to be Combined into a Single Covenant](#)
- HB 559 – [Accelerate Expiration of Sales Tax Exemption for Data Centers](#)
- HB 560 – [Allow Absent Counties for LOST](#)
- HB 712 – [Prohibit Non-Tax Fees on the Tax Bill](#)
- HR 250 – [Freeze Fair Market Value at the Most Recent Purchase Price](#)
- SB 43 and SR 55 – [Increase CUVA Acreage Limit to 6,000 Acres](#)
- SB 47 – [Sales Tax Holiday for Firearms and Firearm Accessories](#)
- SB 129 – ["Georgia Supporting those Who Sacrificed for Service Act"](#)

Appendix C



HB 92 – HB 581 (2024) REVISIONS

[Staff: Dante Handel]

This legislation revises several provisions from [HB 581 \(2024\)](#) and makes other changes related to property taxes and sales taxes.

Property Tax Generally:

- For all homestead exemptions: Taxpayers are now able to apply for the homestead exemption beyond the historic deadline of April 1st; they may apply up to the end of their 45-day window to appeal their notice of assessment.
- Requires each taxing authority to approve and submit their estimated rollback rate to the board of tax assessors (BOA) and the tax commissioner at least 15 days before that year's mailing of the notice of assessment (NOA).
 - If an estimated rollback rate is not timely submitted, then the NOA for that specific jurisdiction will include an estimate of taxes owed based upon the property's current assessed value and the prior year's millage rate for such jurisdiction, which is similar to how NOA's were prepared prior to HB 581 (2024).

Revisions to HB 581 (2024):

- Limits the floating homestead exemption's applicability to only the homestead and no more than five acres of immediately surrounding land, unless the property is enrolled under the preferential assessments for Conservation Use (CUVA) or Forestland Protection (FLPA), in which cases the floating homestead exemption is limited to the homestead dwelling and the lesser of two acres or that local government's minimum acreage requirement for zoning.
- Clarifies that a surviving spouse may continue the floating homestead exemption without the need to apply or reapply following their spouse's death.
- Local governments that opted out of HB 581 and which do not have a generally applicable floating homestead exemption or freeze for their jurisdiction:
 - Requires the jurisdiction to vote to opt out of HB 581 again in 2027. To opt out again, the local government must complete three public hearings and pass a resolution to do so, otherwise the floating homestead exemption from HB 581 becomes effective for 2027 and thereafter.
 - A disclaimer is added to the tax bill stating the name of the governing authority that opted out of HB 581 and providing the main phone number to contact that governing authority.
- Allows local governments that opted out of the HB 581 floating homestead exemption to rescind their decision to opt out and join HB 581's exemption prospectively by adopting a resolution to do so by April 30 for tax year 2025, or by March 1 of any year from tax year 2026 through 2029.

Sales Tax:

- Adds language so that cities representing less than five percent of the municipal population (counting only cities that levy a property tax) are not necessary for a county to reach an intergovernmental agreement regarding the Floating Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST).
- Establishes a local sales and use tax exemption for Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) funds used by school districts on projects associated with such tax, but only if the school district has a generally applicable floating or frozen homestead exemption.

This legislation became effective April 1, 2025, and is applicable to taxable years beginning on or after 2025.

Appendix D



2025 Governor Kemp's Veto Messages

Governor Kemp vetoed seven bills. One bill was of interest to counties. View the Governor's 2025 veto messages [here](#).

Vetoed Bill of Interest to Counties:

[**HB 532 – State Forestry commission Grant Disbursement**](#) (Rep. Buddy Deloach, 167th). This legislation would have revised the State Forestry Commission's grant distribution to counties that have more than 20,000 acres of unimproved real property owned and maintained by the Department of Natural Resources.

Appendix E

OVERVIEW OF AMENDED FY 2025 AND FY 2026 BUDGETS

The final amount appropriated for the AFY 2025 budget is \$40.5 billion which is a 12.2% increase over the original FY 2025 budget.

The final amount appropriated for the FY 2026 budget is \$37.8 billion which is a 4.4% increase over the original FY 2025 budget.

There was no state employee COLA, raise or merit increase provided in the FY 2026 budget.

The overview below lists some of the additional appropriations of interest to counties by state agency.

The final AFY 2025 budget can be found in [AFY Budget \(HB 67\)](#).

The final FY 2026 budget can be found in [FY 26 Budget \(HB 68\)](#).

AFY 2025 State Budget Highlights Impacting Georgia Counties

All of the amounts listed below are increases to the current FY 2025 budget.

Department of Transportation:

- \$265 million for the Local Road Assistance Program (LRA) with no required local match
- \$46 million to the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank's grant and loan program
- \$24.4 million for the Local Maintenance Improvement Grants (LMIG)
- \$867 million for response costs and relief from Hurricane Helene
- \$500 million for freight and logistics efficiency and safety

Department of Community Affairs

- \$5.2 million for Coordinate Planning
- \$200 million for water and sewer infrastructure (GEFA)
- \$99.6 million for the One Georgia Authority
- \$501.7 million in funding for the development and construction of water infrastructure in Georgia's coastal region
- \$28 million for the Rural Workforce Housing Program
- \$10 million for grants for rural site development
- \$25 million for Hurricane Helene relief efforts
- \$5 million to provide relief for county facilities copying with federal law

Governor's Emergency Fund

- \$113 million for Hurricane Helene emergency response expenses
- \$50 million for state and local match (25%) of debris removal from local roads and rights of way due to Hurricane Helene

Office of the Governor

- \$5 million in Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security to facilitate the transition to Next Generation 911 emergency services

FY 2026 State Budget Highlights Impacting Georgia Counties

All the amounts listed below are increases from the FY2025 budget, as amended.

Department of Agriculture

- \$2.4 million to move the Center for Rural Prosperity and Innovation from the Board of Regents to the Department of Agriculture

Department of Community Health

- \$2.8 million for emergency medical services (EMS) transport reimbursement to begin upon patient pickup (0-10 miles will now be covered). FMAP match - \$5,510,618

Department of Corrections

- \$9.9 million for county correctional institutions to increase per diem rates by \$6 per day to a total of \$30

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

- \$1.1 million to annualize the operations of a 30-bed jail-based competency restoration program pilot in Dodge County
- \$1.1 million to operationalize a new 20-bed forensic unit at the Georgia Regional Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility in Atlanta
- \$1.6 million to operationalize a new 30-bed Project New Hope forensic step-down unit at the West Central Georgia Regional Hospital in Columbus
- \$2 million to operationalize a new 17-bed forensic unit at the Central State Hospital Allen Building in Milledgeville.
- \$9.4 million for a new behavioral health crisis center in north Fulton County

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- \$3 million to add staff across multiple disciplines to keep up with the ever-increasing demand for investigative work and forensic scientific services
- \$2.7 million for investigative tools and technology to improve GBI's ability to solve crimes

Department of Natural Resources – Environmental Protection Division

- \$2 million for the Solid Waste Trust Fund to reflect an increase in scrap tire fees

Office of the Secretary of State

- \$4 million to replace voting machine batteries

Department of Transportation

- 10% increase for the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grants (LMIG) program to reflect motor fuel excise tax revenue
- \$3.6 million for Airport Aid

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