



GEDA



2012 PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES

January 9 - 26, 2012
General Assembly Week 1 & 2

Georgia Economic Developers Association ~ (404) 962-4110 ~ www.geda.org

Budget

The Joint House and Senate appropriation committees met during the week of January 16-20 to review the Governor's budget recommendations with agency representatives. Most agencies were asked to identify 2 percent budget reductions. In some cases the reductions exceeded 2%.

The Department of Economic Development's amended 2012 budget that provides funding for the remainder of the fiscal year was reduced by \$557,343. In contrast, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) amended FY 12 recommended budget increased by \$15,487,408 due to an increase in state pass-through funds for attached state authorities. \$10,000,000 was added to the One Georgia Authority budget. On February 1, the House Appropriations Committee approved an amended FY12 budget that included a \$200,000 reduction in REBA funding. This will now move to the Senate for their consideration. **If you have opinions on this development, you are urged to contact your Senators immediately.** Here are links to the proposed [amended FY2012 budget](#) and the [FY 2013 budget](#).

Overview

The 2012 session of the Georgia General Assembly convened on Monday, January 9, 2012 and continued in session through Friday, January 13 (Week 1). The General Assembly recessed Monday, January 16 through Friday, January 20, 2012 for budget hearings. The General Assembly reconvened on Monday, January 23 and recessed on Thursday, January 26, 2012 (Week 2).

It appears that there will not be an attempt to pass a comprehensive tax bill. This should lead to the introduction of a number of bills authorizing sales and use tax exemptions for specific businesses or industries.

The Governor released the Georgia Competitiveness Initiative report late last week. This should be followed by the introduction of a legislative

package to support some of the recommendations. The GEDA legislative luncheon was held Wednesday, January 25, 2012 at the Floyd Towers. January 24 was declared Tourism and Hospitality Day and Georgia Music Day at the Capitol (SR 694 and SR 703).

March 6 was designated as Peanut Butter and Jelly Day at the Capitol (SR 655).

House Bills of Interest

HB 718 – Representative Peak of the 137th & others Amends Chapter 7 of Title 50 of OCGA relating to the Department of Economic Development so as to create the Georgia Capital Acceleration Authority; so as to provide for a program administrator; to provide for the issuance of premium tax credits to insurance companies or holding companies that purchase such credits to offset liability for state insurance premium taxes; to provide for reports; and for other purposes. This bill is similar to previous bills that promote the creation of Certified Capital Corporations (CAPCOs).

HB 741 – Representative Ralston of the 7th & others Amends the General Appropriations Act for FY 2012

HB 742 – Representative Ralston of the 7th & others Creates the General Appropriations Act for FY 2013

HB 747 – Representative Beverly of the 139th & others

Amends Article 2 of Chapter 7 of Title 48 of OCGA relating to the imposition of income taxes, rate, computation, and exemptions, so as to provide that any census tract having a poverty rate of 45% or greater shall be deemed to have the same eligibility for treatment as Tier 1 counties and for other purposes.



Budget (cont.)

The Department of Economic Development's 2013 fiscal year budget increased by \$446,487 due largely to an increase in State General Funds. DCA's budget increased by \$9,758,041 due to an increase in pass through funds for attached state agencies. The One Georgia Authority received a \$10,000,000 allocation for FY 2013. The REBA allocation remained at \$11,417,289.

Calendar

The leadership of the General Assembly adopted a calendar (HR 1140) during Week 2 that keeps the membership in session through Monday, March 12, 2012 (Day 31). The remainder of the calendar will be adopted in March. It appears that the Governor's office and the House and Senate leadership have agreed that the session should end before April 1.

Senate Bills/Resolutions of Interest

SB 301 – Senator Bulloch of the 11th and others
Amends Part 1 of Article 1 of Chapter 3 of Title 27 of OCGA relating to general provisions regarding hunting, so as to authorize the use of silencers on hunting firearms under certain circumstances, and for other matters. If you are a hunter, you may like this bill.

SB 313 – Senator Rogers of the 21st and others
Amends Title 36 of OCGA relating to local government, so as to repeal Chapter 90 relating the "Local Government Cable Fair Competition Act of 1999"; to enact the "Broadband Investment Equity Act" to provide for the regulation of competition between public providers of communications service and private providers of such service; to provide for authorization to public providers to deliver communications services and invest capital in facilities designed to provide communications services; to provide for the applicability of

the public records and public meetings laws; and for other purposes.

SR 719 – Senators Albers of the 56th and others
Creates the Tourism Promotion Joint Study Commission. The Commission will have 12 members and will be tasked to accomplish the following:

- 1) Inventory Georgia's existing tourism destinations, attractions, and special events and determine the potential for the development of future destinations, attractions, and special events in Georgia;
- 2) Identify stakeholders and community partners, including convention and visitors bureaus, tourism councils, chambers of commerce and other entities which play a vital role in the tourism industry in Georgia;
- 3) Conduct review of state and national policies to

discern best practices and lessons learned with regard to public policy that encourages tourism to this state;

- 4) Conduct meetings around the state to solicit input from stakeholders with a specific interest in identifying barriers to growth and progress; and
- 5) Develop specific recommendations with regard to the scope and content of a strategic plan for increasing tourism in Georgia.

