

Specialty Contractors Coalition Legislative Update

Week Number 4

As we reach the quarter mark of the 2015 Legislative Session, bills are slowly beginning to move between the Senate and House. Although there have already been 254 pieces of legislation brought forward to review, 254 is a very small fraction of what lies ahead for the General Assembly. To put it in perspective, during the 2013-2014 legislative session The House and The Senate reviewed 2,985 bills and resolutions. After completing 3 legislative days last week, the House and Senate have set a schedule that will leave the 2015 Session standing at Legislative Day 15 on Thursday, February 12th.

Bills of Interest:

Transportation:

[HB 123: Trailer Safety Chain](#) – Rep. John Yates – This bill would require that any vehicle towing a trailer utilize a safety chain, cable, or similar device to ensure the trailer remains attached and in tow should it become detached from the hitch.

Bill Status: House Second Readers

[HB 170 - Transportation Funding Act of 2015](#) – Rep. Jay Roberts –

Originally, the bill would provide for \$1 billion in funding for the state's transportation infrastructure by transitioning the current excise tax and sales tax built into the cost of fuel into a fixed excise tax of 29.2 cents. Georgia's constitution requires all of these funds to be dedicated to roads and bridges. It also sets an annual road use fee for those with alternative fuel vehicles. In total, roughly \$800M will be generated with this "user fee" approach. Another \$60M will be collected in long haul excise taxes. These are some of the things being considered.

Bill Status: House Second Readers



[SB 4 - Surface Transportation Projects in Urban Redevelopment Areas](#) – Sen. Steve Gooch – This bill would allow for surface transportation projects in Urban Redevelopment Areas. It also expands the projects that fall under the urban redevelopment provisions to include transit facilities and improvements, sidewalks, streetscapes, trails and bicycle facilities.

Bill Status: Senate Read and Referred

[SB 6 - Driver's License for Deferred Action Immigrants](#) – Sen. Joshua McKoon – This bill would prohibit persons granted deferred action by the Department of Homeland Security from obtaining a drivers license, permit, or card. Those found driving without a license may have their vehicle removed and impounded for 60 days. Also, the Department of Driver Services will be required to participate in the E-Verify initiative of DHS.

Bill Status: Senate Read and Referred

Taxes:

[HB 60- Exempt Motor Fuels from State Sales Tax](#) – Rep. Ed Setzler – This bill would include the following:

- Provide a sales & use tax exemption for the federal government, the state government, and any county or municipality of this state on motor fuels.
- Phase-in increases in the state excise tax on motor fuel beginning on January 1, 2018 from 7.5 cents per gallon to 10.5 cents per gallon and increases 3 cents per gallon each year thereafter until the excise tax reaches 22.5 cents per gallon on January 1, 2022.
- On or after January 1, 2023, the excise tax shall be adjusted annually based on the inflation rate determined by the consumer price index published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Reduce the individual income tax on or after January 1, 2018 to 5.9 percent. The reduction will continue each year at the rate of 1/10 of one percent until the rate is reduced to 5.5 percent on or after January 1, 2022.

Bill Status: House Second Readers

[HB 143 - Tax Accountability Act of 2015](#) – Rep. David Wilkerson – This bill would provide that any bill introduced after the effective date of this bill, which proposes a tax exemption with a fiscal impact, may only be introduced during the first year of the term of office of members of the General Assembly and only be passed during the second year of that same term.

Bill Status: House Second Readers



[SR 65 - Senate Special Tax Exemption Study Committee](#): Sen. Harold Jones II – The purpose of both SR 43 and SR 65 is to create a study committee to lead a comprehensive review of the cost and benefit of all state tax exemptions and recommend any legislative action be taken to most effectively stimulate Georgia's economy.

Bill Status: Senate Read and Referred

Other:

[HB 57 - Financing of Solar Technology by Retail Customers](#) – Rep. Mike Dudgeon – This bill would include the following:

- Allow for the financing of solar technology by retail electric customers for the generation of electric energy.
- Solar technology may be leased by the retail customer from a solar financing agent who may be an electric service provider or any person whose business includes the leasing, financing, or installation of solar technology.
- Residential application is limited to ten kilowatts for a customer or 125 per cent of the actual or expected maximum annual peak demand of the premises for a commercial customer.
- The intent of the legislation is to facilitate customers of electric service providers to invest in and install solar technology, to reduce upfront costs involved in solar technology investments, and not be considered as electric service providers.

Bill Status: House Committee Favorably Reported



[HB 122 - Low-emission Vehicle State Income Tax Credit Removed](#) – Rep. Chuck Martin - This bill would remove the income tax credit for low emission vehicles on or after July 1, 2015.

Bill Status: House Second Readers

[SB 2: Competencies and Core Curriculum in Elementary and Secondary Education](#) – Sen. Lindsey Tippins – This bill would provide that a student who completes certain requirements relating to postsecondary coursework may be awarded a high school diploma.
Bill Status: Senate Passed/Adopted by Substitute; House First Readers

Understanding Bill Status:

- **FIRST READING**
 - Is the Introduction of the Bill and Bill is assigned to a standing committee.
- **SECOND READING**
 - In the House only, on next legislative day
 - In Senate, second reading comes after bill is reported favorably from committee.
- **COMMITTEE ACTION**
 - Recommend Bill or Resolution Do Pass; or
 - Recommend Do NOT Pass; or
 - Recommend Do Pass with changes (amendments or substitutes);or
 - Hold Bill.
- **THIRD READING AND PASSAGE**
 - House Clerk or Senate Secretary prepares a General Calendar of bills favorably reported from committee, one of the following happens:
- Legislation which was second read the day before is placed on a calendar in numeric order for floor action prior to the Rules Committee meeting to choose bills for consideration.
- After a certain point, set by rule, the Rules Committee meets and prepares a Rules Calendar for the next day's floor consideration from bills on General Calendar.
- The presiding officer calls up bills from the Rules Calendar for floor action in order as they appear on this calendar.
 - Once presiding officer calls bill up from Rules Calendar, Clerk or Secretary reads bill's title (third reading). Bill is now ready for floor debate, amendments, and voting. After debate, main question is called and members vote. if bill is approved by majority of total membership of that house , it is sent to the other house.
- **TRANSMITTAL TO OTHER CHAMBER** Bill is passed if:
 - If second chamber passes bill, it is returned to chamber where bill was introduced.
 - If first chamber rejects changes and second chamber insists, a conference committee may be appointed. Committee report is accepted by both chambers.
- Bill is enrolled and sent to the Governor (if requested). Otherwise, all enrolled bills sent to Governor following adjournment sine die.
- **GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE/VETO** Governor may sign bill or do nothing, and bill becomes law. Governor may veto bill, which requires two-thirds of members of each house to override.
- **ACT:** Act and other laws enacted at the session are printed in the Georgia Laws series. Also, act is incorporated into the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Act becomes effective the following July 1, unless a different effective date is provided in act.