



LEGISLATIVE Update

February 11, 2019

2019 General Assembly Kicks into Gear

General Assembly Overview

After the expected slow start due to legislative and executive branch transition, bad weather and the Super Bowl, the General Assembly is poised for several busy weeks. The General Assembly entered into a very aggressive scheduling resolution that features a March 7 Crossover Day (Day 28), and Sine Die (Day 40) on Tuesday April 2nd.

There are numerous bills and resolutions that directly or indirectly affect the rail industry.

GRA Issues

The GRA Board has set its 2019-2020 agenda which consists of seeking elimination of the sales tax on diesel used in locomotives, supporting the creation of a state commission on Freight and Logistics, and opposing truck weight increases. The GRA is also working with the Department of Revenue and the Governor's office to revise the DOR proposed rules regarding the tax credits that were passed last year. We expect a positive result that will allow short lines to receive the benefits intended by HB 735.

The GRA looks forward to working with its members, allies, and the General Assembly on these important issues. Also, GRA will be aggressively working to oppose legislation supported by union interests.

HB 189: Elimination of Diesel Fuel Tax. This bill, which will eliminate the sales tax on diesel fuel used in locomotives, is the GRA's top priority for this session.

The bill has a strong set of sponsors: Rep. Vance Smith (R-Troup), a member of the Ways & Means Committee and a former GDOT Commissioner, House Transportation Chairman Kevin Tanner (R-Dawson), House Ways & Means Chairman Brett Harrell (R-Gwinnett), and Rep. Patty Bentley (D-Taylor). The bill is assigned to the Ways & Means Committee. **GRA Supports HB 189.**

SR 19 and HR 37: The Creation of Georgia Commission on Freight and Logistics. The Senate and House filed nearly identical resolutions that would create a commission on freight and logistics. The difference in the two measures is the composition of the membership of the commission. The Senate Resolution passed the Senate Transportation Committee last week. The House is expected to pass the resolution at its meeting on Thursday February 14. **GRA Supports SR 19 and HR 37**

HB 190: Two Man Crew. This bill by Rep. Rick Williams (R-Baldwin) would require the lead locomotive of trains, cabooses, and each locomotive unit capable of independent operation while in use for the movement of freight to have an automated external defibrillator and a crew composed of at least two individuals. The bill calls for penalties in cases of noncompliance. The bill is assigned to the House Transportation Committee. **GRA Opposes HB 190.**

What to Expect This Week

The legislature meets all five days this week and action is expected in the House Transportation Committee on HR 37.