



LEGISLATIVE Update

March 1, 2019

General Assembly Overview

The 2019 Legislative Session has passed the halfway mark! Things have become especially busy under the Gold Dome as Crossover Day quickly approaches. For a bill to have a chance at successfully making it through the legislative process, it must move from its chamber of origin to the other on or before this Thursday March 7th. The House passed the 2020 budget this week and it now goes to the Senate.

During the past two weeks, GRA has joined with its members to fend off a series of harmful bills that have been filed on behalf of the labor unions (see recap below). Thanks to the efforts at the Capitol by Craig Camuso (CSX), Conner Poe (NS), and Linda Hamrick (G&W), none of these bills have moved. The goal for next week is to keep these bills from passing prior to the crossover day.

The upcoming week will no doubt be one of the most hectic weeks of the session. Committees will become increasingly busy as legislators seek to get their bills moved prior to Crossover.

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 bills that are harmful to the industry, including truck weight increases.

An Update on Bills of Interest to the GRA:

SR 19 and HR 37: The Creation of Georgia Commission on Freight and Logistics. SR 19 successfully passed the Senate and was referred to the House Transportation committee. HR 37 passed the House 169-1. Upon its arrival to the Senate it was assigned to the Transportation committee chaired by Brandon Beach. We expect the two Transportation Chairmen to come to an agreement on the slight differences in the makeup of the commission and use one of the bills as the vehicle to accomplish the creation of the commission. **GRA Supports SR 19 and HR 37**

HB 189: Elimination of Diesel Fuel Tax. This legislation to be added to the list of issues to be discussed by the Freight and Logistics Commission that is anticipated to be created this year. Governor Kemp and legislative leaders have taken steps to slow down bills that reduce state revenue in a move to allow the new administration the time it needs to assess the effectiveness of the various exemptions, credits, and deductions. **GRA Supports HB 189.**

HB 190: Two Man Crew. HB 190 by Rep. Rick Williams (R-Baldwin County) received a committee hearing before the Rail sub-committee of House Transportation this week. Craig Camuso (CSX) testified on behalf of the rail industry's interest at a hearing held Thursday, February 28th. The labor union provided emotional testimony and showed up in impressive numbers to support the bill. **GRA strongly opposes this bill.**

HB 375: Rail Crossings. This bill by Rep. Joseph Gullett (R-Paulding County) seeks to prohibit the operation of a train in a manner that occupies or blocks a street, road, or highway grade crossing longer than a certain amount of time. The bill has not received a hearing. **GRA opposes this bill.**

SB 96: Whistle Posts Requirement. SB 96 by Senator Randy Robertson (R-Troup County) would require the erection and maintenance of whistle posts by railroad companies in advance of a private crossing. SB 96 is currently in the Senate Transportation committee and was on an agenda for hearing yesterday, but the Chairman decided to pull the bill after determining that the votes to move it forward were not there. **The GRA opposes SB 96.**

Short Line Income Tax Credit: We are expecting the DOR to publish revised rules that would permit the short line to clarify that the RR has the ability to 'sell before claiming' the credit. This will be a considerable improvement from the initial rule that was proposed earlier in the year. Please thank Governor Kemp, CFO Greg Dozier, DOR Commissioner Lynne Riley and our legislative champions for their assistance in working through this complicated issue.

What to Expect This Week

The legislature meets on Monday and Tuesday with a committee day on Wednesday before Crossover on Legislative Day 28 on Thursday.