

February 5, 2010

The Georgia General Assembly met Monday through Friday of this week completing a total of 13 legislative days. They plan to meet Monday through Thursday of next week, and will then adopt a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday schedule indefinitely. Bills have started to pass out of committee, and the number of items considered on the floor each day is beginning to increase.

Governor Perdue announced a number of significant proposals this week at the state capitol. Today, Governor Perdue announced his proposal to make four constitutional offices appointed instead of elected. If approved by the voters in November, the Governor elected in 2014 would be the first to appoint insurance, labor, and agriculture commissioners and the state school superintendent - the appointments would then have to be approved by the Senate. Georgia is one of few states who hold elections for these positions.

The much anticipated Water Stewardship Act of 2010 was introduced in both chambers on Thursday, sponsored by Senate Natural Resources and the Environment Committee Chairman Ross Tolleson and House Natural Resources and Environment Committee Chair Lynn Smith. The bills were introduced in identical form and both chambers will hold separate hearings on the bills.

The House Bill is HB 1094 and the Senate version is SB 370. The Water Stewardship Act will require low flow toilets, faucets and other equipment to be installed in new construction after July, 2012. The bills also currently call for the installation and use of the submetering of individual units in new construction for future commercial and residential multifamily construction.

Other Bills on the Move

The House Agriculture committee passed House Bill 1048, which will mandate that each conveyance of real property on which a residential or commercial structure is located shall require a certification that such structure has been inspected for termites and other wood-destroying organisms.

Senator Rogers' bill related to Property Tax Appeals and Assessments, [SB 346](#), was introduced on Monday. The 47 page bill details over 40 different changes to current law, including:

- Allow willing counties to join together and form "Regional BOE's"
- Establish sales price of an "arms-length" transaction as the maximum assessed value for a period of 1-year following the transaction. This shall include all sales made on or after January 1, 2010
- Revenue generation shall be considered when determining assessed value of commercially zoned property
- Current use of property at current zoning - not highest and best use, shall be used to determine current assessed value
- Every notice of assessment shall include notice of availability of qualified comparable sales data used to establish valuation
- Any county whose digest includes assessed commercial value in excess of \$100,000,000 shall make available to the taxpayer a licensed appraiser who will act in place of the BOE to determine value of any parcel which is zoned commercial

Legislative Tracking

***Indicates new legislation**

Type	Number	Title	Sponsor	Details	Status	Committee
HB	169	Proposed new or revised flood elevations	Carter, Earl of Pooler	This bill would require the Department of Natural Resources to notify affected property owners and local governments whenever the Federal Emergency Management Agency provides legal notice under the federal National Flood Insurance Program of any new flood elevations in this state.	Senate Conference Committee Report Adopted 4/3/09	Senate Natural Resources Committee
HB	231	Practice of Architecture	Jerguson, Sean of Canton	Would clarify the types of construction projects for which documents are prepared, certified, and submitted for building permits by a Georgia registered interior designer.	Senate recommitted.	Senate Regulated Industries
HB	247	New Home Access Act	Thomas, Brian of Lilburn	"New Home Access Act". General provisions and standards for construction of single family construction.	House Second Readers	House Ways and Means
HB	263	In-home services; employees; criminal background investigation	Peake, Allen of Macon	Any person that is offering in-home services shall conduct a criminal background investigation of each employee, and that any person who fails these background checks shall not be employed.	House Second Readers	Agriculture and Consumer Affairs
HB	405	Tax Credits, efficient water Fixtures	Wilkinson, Joe of Atlanta	Would provide tax credits for residential properties that retrofit water efficient fixtures in existing homes.	Failed to crossover last session.	House Ways and Means
HB	545	Commencement and Service of Civil Actions	Willard, Wendell of Atlanta	Establishes a statewide appointment system for private process servers. The bill also mandates that property owners grant process servers access to a gated community for a reasonable time to serve process. Property owners often hire private process servicers during dispossessory cases, finding the option to have many benefits.	Senate recommitted.	Senate Public Safety
HB	579	Contractors; eligibility for licensure	Maxwell, Howard of Dallas	This bill relates to eligibility for licensure without examination and burden upon the applicant relative to residential and general contractors.	Senate Recommitted	Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities
HB	885	Magistrate Courts	Levitas, Kevin of Atlanta	Relating to civil proceedings in magistrate courts, so as to provide for applicability of the "Georgia Civil Practice Act" under certain circumstances; to change provisions relating to service of process.	House Second Readers Heard in Subcommittee 2/4/10	House Judiciary

HB	951	Sales and use tax exemption; certain school supplies; energy efficient products; provide	Smith, Lynn of Newnan	Exemptions from state sales and use tax for certain school supplies, clothing, footwear, computers, and computer related accessories July 29-Aug 1, 2010. And would provide an exemption from sales and use tax for certain energy efficient products or water efficient products Oct 7-10, 2010.	House Second Readers. Heard in Subcommittee 2/4/10	House Ways and Means
HB	953	Sales and use tax exemption; certain energy or water efficient products; provide	Smith, Lynn of Newnan	Would provide an exemption from sales and use tax for purchase of energy efficient products or water efficient products with a sales price of \$1,500.00 or less per product purchased for noncommercial home or personal use October 7-10, 2010.	House Second Readers. Heard in Subcommittee 2/4/10	House Ways and Means
HB	973	Magistrate courts; jurisdictional limit in civil claims	Jacobs, Mike of Atlanta	Would increase magistrate courts jurisdictional limit in civil claims to cases of \$25,000 , currently \$15,000	House Second Readers	House Judiciary
HB	1015	Street gang terrorism and prevention	Golick, Rich of Smyrna	Would amend Georgia code as it applies to street gang activity	House Second Readers	House Judiciary (Non Civil)
*HB	1023	Jobs, Opportunity and Business Success Act of 2010	Graves, Tom of Ranger	Would provide, for a period of time, a waiver of certain filing fees otherwise charged in connection with such entities; for a period of time, employers who hire those receiving employment security benefits will be entitled to a credit against employer contributions; a portion of net long-term capital gains shall be excluded from state taxable income of corporations and individuals.	House Second Readers	House Special Committee on Small Business Devel. And Job Creation
*HB	1024	Jobs, Opportunity and Business Success Act of 2010	Graves, Tom of Ranger	Would provide tax relief and encourage employment opportunities and business stimulation; eliminate the requirement for dealers to make returns and remittances with respect to estimated sales and use tax liability.	House Second Readers	House Ways and Means
*HB	1041	Tax digests; not approved by commissioner under certain conditions; eliminate	Epps, James "Bubber" of Dry Branch	Relates to the approval of tax digests when property is in arbitration or on appeal. Would eliminate certain conditions under which digests are not approved by the state revenue commissioner.	House Second Readers	House Ways and Means
*HB	1048	Conveyances; structures require certified termite and wood-destroying organism inspection	McCall, Tom of Elberton	Each conveyance of real property located a residential or commercial structure shall require a certification it has been inspected for termites and other wood-destroying organisms.	House Committee Favorably reported.	House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs
*HB	1050	Real estate appraisers; appraisal management	Benton, Tommy of Jefferson	Would add regulations for establishment and maintenance of real estate appraisal management companies.	House Second Readers	House Regulated Industries and Utilities

		companies, add regulations				
*HB	1069	Income tax; credits for equipment that reduces energy or water usage	Wilkinson, Joe of Atlanta	Would provide tax credits for certain qualified equipment that reduces business or domestic energy or water usage.	House Second Readers	House Ways and Means
*HB	1094	Natural Resources, Department of; develop water conservation incentives; require	Smith, Lynn of Newnan	Revise provisions of law relating to water supply and water conservation; require the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, including its Environmental Protection Division, and other agencies to examine their practices, programs, policies, rules, and regulations in order to develop programs and incentives for voluntary water conservation. Require high-efficiency toilets, shower heads, and faucets in new construction.	House Hopper	
SB	184	Contractor; service of notice of commencement	Weber, Dan of Dunwoody	Would provide for certain requirements regarding service of a notice of commencement to a contractor relating to payment bonds, so as to provide for certain requirements regarding service to a contractor; to provide for a procedure for the application of certain forms.	Failed to be voted on last session.	House Judiciary
SB	308	Firearms; carrying and possession	Seabaugh, Mitch of Sharpsburg	Change provisions regarding the carrying and possession of firearms, so as to permit persons with a weapons license to carry certain weapons in parks, historic sites, or recreational areas and while hunting during archery or primitive hunting season.	Senate Read and Referred	Senate Judiciary
SB	311	Water Savings and Conservation Act	Shafer, David of Duluth	Would require the Department of Natural Resources to inspect certain infrastructure relating to removing surface water; to provide certain alternatives to governmental entities required to repair or replace certain inadequate infrastructure.	Senate Read and Referred	Senate Natural Resources
*SB	346	Ad Valorem Taxes; comprehensive revisions	Rogers, Chip of Woodstock	Would provide year-round property appeals; every property receives an annual notice of assessment ; statewide uniformity of assessment notices and appeal forms; Allow counties to accept payment plans for property taxes and discounts for early payments; establish time limits for assessor action in response to appeals; require a unanimous vote by Board of Equalization members to increase assessed value	Senate Read and Referred	Senate Finance

*SB	362	Property: liens of mechanics/materialmen; waiver and release upon payment	Weber, Dan of Dunwoody	Relating to liens of mechanics and materialmen - would eliminate provisions stating that a mechanic or materialman who has executed a waiver and release upon payment shall be presumed to have received payment if the mechanic or materialman does not file an affidavit of nonpayment within a certain period of time.	Senate Hopper	
*SB	370	Water: examine practices, programs, policies; develop programs for voluntary water conservation; reports of measurable progress	Tolleson, Ross of Perry	Revise provisions of law relating to water supply and water conservation; require the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, including its Environmental Protection Division, and for other agencies to examine their practices, programs, policies, rules, and regulations to develop programs and incentives for voluntary water conservation; install high-efficiency toilets, shower heads, and faucets in new construction.	Senate Hopper	