

**2008**  
**GEORGIA ENGINEERS LEGISLATIVE COALITION**

Georgia Engineering Alliance  
Harris Tower, Suite 700  
233 Peachtree Street  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
404-521-2324

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

February 1, 2008

**10<sup>th</sup> DAY**

Water. A motion to reconsider approval of the State Water Plan failed in the House. There are a number of other bills related to water, which deal with reconciling current law with the new Plan and/or get at the hard issues in the Plan: who appoints the regional water planning boards; prohibit/make harder interbasin transfer; ensure that the Metro Water District must abide with the Plan; etc. The Plan was approved with overwhelming majorities, and the motion to reconsider was rejected by an even wider margin; thus it seems that the issue is settled for now. Nonetheless, related bills are HB 982, HB 996, HB 1009, and HB 1022. Also, HB 1009 & SB 368 prohibit the EPD Director from closing swimming pools as part of a water conservation plan. SB 351 establishes the joint State-wide Water Planning Oversight Committee.

Transportation. The Joint Study Committee on Transportation Funding released its report with a press conference on Wednesday go to [www.gatransfunding.com](http://www.gatransfunding.com). The “big” bill to enhance overall transportation funding is still in the works. Wise folks say it is not quite time to flush the covey. Other transportation bills introduced this week include: HB 1019 – creates the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank at SRTA which would make loans for any type of transportation facility; HB 1035 extends the date from 2008 to 2011 for the exemption from motor fuel tax for transit and campus shuttles; HB 1056 requires the General Assembly to approve all MPO Transportation Plans if expenditures of state gas tax funds are involved. SR 781 urges DOT to prepare a state-wide strategic transportation plan. (The General Assembly will caucus today to elect members to the GDOT Board - where the terms have expired. Much has been said about the hardball politics and the implications for Commissioner Gena Abraham. This report is written before the vote – I’m going to a safe place over the week-end.)

Lien Law. SB 374 implements the recommendations of the Lien Law Study Committee. This is a tough read for most ordinary human beings. In general it clarifies the procedural requirements for liens but leaves the underlying proposition intact.

The *Legislative Update* is emailed each week of the session. Please distribute it to members of your association who have an interest in “engineer” issues. Also, look for

occasional “Urgent Action” alerts when you will be asked to call on your elected leaders and let them know your opinion on a particular issue.

Finally, please let the Legislative Coalition know if there are issues that you think would be of interest to Georgia Engineers.

You may go to [www.legis.state.ga.us](http://www.legis.state.ga.us) to look at specific bills and their status. You can also do word searches. If there are specific bills/issues that should be tracked, please contact the Legislative Coalition.

## **Summary Status of Closely Monitored Bills**

As bills are introduced, the ones of interest will be summarized in this section of the Update.

### **HOUSE BILLS**

HB 890 - Provides that the penalty for running a red light when caught by a camera Will be \$50.00 rather than the current \$70.00.

HB 892 - Eliminates the ability of the police to use cameras to catch vehicles running a red light by deleting the code section on red light cameras.

HB 979 – The GREAT tax bill. This is the Speaker’s bill to replace the tax on property for School Districts with a much expanded sales tax on services (the measure also contains language to limit property tax increases).

HB 1055 – This bill would make various adjustments to licensing laws for interior designers, auctioneers, geologists, massage therapists, physical therapists, and veterinarians. The bill is not significant for engineers, except that it could serve as a vehicle for language could affect engineers.

### **HOUSE RESOLUTIONS**

HR 1022 **Approved** – Would approve the State Water Plan (same as SR 701)

### **SENATE BILLS**

SB 342 – “Water Conservation and Drought Relief Act”. Authorizes the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission to fund up to 20% of the cost to convert old SCS ponds to water supply reservoirs and up to 40% for new water supply reservoirs. Directs EPD to take a few steps to streamline the permitting process for new reservoirs.

SB 352 - Heretofore, the General Assembly did not have oversight authority for DNR adoption of rules/regulations. This originated when such rules were motivated by federal

rules and the state had to be consistent with them to retain delegated authority. SB 352 allows legislative oversight of DNR rules which do not originate in federal rules.

SB 374 – Provides clarity in the procedures associated with mechanics and materialman Liens; which include engineers.

### **SENATE RESOLUTIONS**

SR 701 **Approved** – Would approve the State Water Plan (same as HR 1022)

SR 781 - Urges DOT to prepare a state-wide strategic transportation plan.