



March 10, 2023

Welcome to GHLA @ the Capitol, your weekly update about news you need to know related to Georgia's lodging industry and the 2023 General Assembly.

GHLA's legislative team will be your eyes and ears under the Gold Dome.

Legislative Schedule

This week the General Assembly was in session Monday through Thursday for legislative days 28-31. The legislature will reconvene on Monday, March 13 for Day 32 and be in session through Thursday, March 16 for Day 35.

For the full legislative schedule, view the [adjournment resolution](#).

Crossover Day Recap

In the Georgia General Assembly, Crossover Day is the deadline bills must be passed by the full body of the chamber the legislation originated from. This is traditionally a very long day under the Gold Dome and Crossover Day 2023, this past Monday, was no exception. Below are the highlights of the bills that GHLA is monitoring:

CVB and Tourism Protections



GHLA's Chris Hardman and Sen. Billy Hickman presenting SB 127 in committee.

Sen. Hickman, alongside GHLA's Chris Hardman, explained to the committee the importance of this legislation to place guardrails on hotel/motel tax usages and the associated authorities. Additionally, Lee Hughes, representing the Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, joined in expressing the important role CVBs have in their communities. This bill would require a local government, prior to altering their local Convention and Visitors Bureau, to first go to the hotel/motel performance review board under the Dept. of Community Affairs for review. We are happy to report that SB127, GHLA priority legislation, passed overwhelmingly out of the Senate on Crossover Day. This bill is currently in House Ways & Mean Committee and is moving through the process.

CPACE Funding

[HB 206](#) by Rep. Steven Sainz (R-St. Mary's) was the final bill to pass the Georgia House on Crossover Day. This bill authorizes commercial property-assessed clean energy (C-PACE) financing and allows hoteliers to take advantage of low-cost financing for energy efficient upgrades and other capital purchases. GHLA supports this additional financing option for property owners and will be working with the coalition to move this legislation through the process.

Southeast Tourism Society in the Budget

The Governor's budget reflects increased funding for important state partners in the tourism industry, and most notably a line item for Southeast Tourism Society (STS) to guarantee the state's tourism department, Explore Georgia, continues its 40 year partnership with STS. This is a necessity for the continued success of tourism in every community in Georgia. Southeast Tourism Society was created by Georgia's first state tourism director and has since become the pinnacle resource for our state's DMOs.

23.10. Tourism - Special Project

Purpose: The purpose of this appropriation is to provide funds for dues membership for southeastern tourism society for area convention and visitor centers bureaus.

1136	Total Funds	\$8,700
1137	State Funds	\$8,700
1138	State General Funds	\$8,700

The above amounts include the following adjustments, additions, and deletions to the previous appropriations act (as amended):

		<u>State Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
1139	Amount from previous Appropriations Act (HB 911) as amended	\$0	\$0
1140	Provide funds for dues membership for southeastern tourism society for area convention and visitor centers bureaus.	\$8,700	\$8,700
1141	Amount appropriated in this Act	----- \$8,700	\$8,700

[HB 18](#), the state's supplemental budget for FY 23, passed both Chambers and the General Assembly is now hard at work on the [FY24 budget](#). GHLA is pleased to report this line was included in the supplemental budget related to tourism.

Electric Vehicles

The Senate approved SB146 on Crossover Day. In addition, last week, the House passed a similar measure, HB406, which would allow electric vehicles to be charged by the kilowatt hour rather than how long they take to recharge.

[SB 146](#) by Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega) and [HB 307](#) by Rep. Alan Powell (R-Hartwell), related to the sale of power and associated infrastructure for electric vehicles, crossed over and will likely continue to move through the legislative process.

Other Notable Bills To Crossover

[HB 30](#) by Rep. John Carson (R-Marietta), to provide for a definition of "anti-Semitism" in the official code of Georgia.

[HB 162](#), a governor's priority, by Rep. Lauren McDonald (R-Cumming), to provide the one-time tax relief refund for Georgia taxpayers.

And What Failed

[SB 114](#) by Sen. Randy Robertson (R-Cataula), a proposal to incorporate the city of Buckhead, failed after heated debate from proponents and opponents on the Senate floor. As a result, [SB 113](#), related to the proposed transfer of assets, was never recognized for a vote on the Senate floor.

[SB180](#) by Sen. Ed Setzler (R-Acworth), known as the "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" (RFRA), failed to receive a committee hearing. This legislation sought to provide state-level protection for people of all faiths by mirroring current federal law. GHLA will continue to oppose any legislation that would allow for any discriminatory practices to flourish in the state.

What to Expect Next

The final weeks of the legislative session are notoriously long and hectic. Legislators and special interests look to bills still alive in the process as potential targets to place language that did not gain traction earlier in the session. GHLA is consistently monitoring these developments in real time to ensure that our industry is well supported and protected.

Legislative Tracking Update

House Bills

[HB548](#) – Representative Kim Schofield (D-Atlanta) - Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Act; certain sales and transfers of tax credits; impose a fee

[HB549](#) – Representative Tyler Smith (R-Bremen) - Georgia State-wide Music Office

Act; enact

[HB550](#) – Representative Debbie Buckner (D-Junction City) - Sales and use tax; sales to or by certain nonprofit organizations that provide volunteer or fundraising services in support of State Parks and Historic Sites; exempt

[HB555](#) – Representative Sandra Scott (D-Rex) - Georgia Firearms and Weapons Act; enact

[HB556](#) – Representative Tyler Smith (R-Bremen) - Pregnancy Protection Act; enact

[HB563](#) – Representative Rob Leverett (R-Elberton) - Fair Employment Practices Act of 1978; hearing before an administrative law judge; provide

[HB568](#) – Representative Beth Camp (R-Concord) - Torts; property owner who prohibits a lawful weapons carrier from possessing a weapon on their property shall assume responsibility for the safety of the weapons carrier from certain threats; provide

[HB574](#) – Representative Joseph Gullett (R-Dallas) - Buildings and housing; local fire ordinances may require fire sprinkles in one and two family dwellings; provide

[HB581](#) – Representative Shaw Blackmon (R-Bonaire) - Audits and Accounts, Department of; revise deadlines, selection criteria, and required contents for certain annual economic analyses

[HB583](#) – Representative Leesa Hagen (R-Lyons) - Food, drugs, and cosmetics; authorize production and sale of homemade food items with certain exemptions, requirements, and disclosures

[HB585](#) – Representative Todd Jones (R-South Forsyth) - Georgia Development Impact Fee Act; enact

[HB589](#) – Representative Mike Cheokas (R-Americus) - Audit and Accounts, Department of; require certain financial disclosures from entities performing work related to fiscal notes

[HB598](#) – Representative Brent Cox (R-Dawsonville) - Professions and businesses; certain boxing, wrestling, and martial art associations and federations; change certain provisions

[HB602](#) – Representative Jason Ridley (R-Chatsworth) - Georgia Athletic and Entertainment Commission; regulation of bare knuckle boxing matches; provide

[HB604](#) – Representative Charlice Byrd (R-Woodstock) - Persons and their rights; life from the moment of conception is accorded same rights and protections guaranteed to all persons; provide

[HB605](#) – Representative Robert Dickey (R-Musella) - REACH Scholarship; victims of human trafficking are eligible; provide

[HB608](#) – Representative Stacey Evans (D-Atlanta) - Transportation, Department of; require public hearings for projects of significant impact

[HB613](#) – Representative Pedro Marin (D-Duluth) - Income tax; qualified citizenship expenses for low-income families; provide tax credit

[HB616](#) – Representative Becky Evans (D-Atlanta) - State government; consider antisemitism when determining whether an alleged criminal act was motivated by discriminatory intent; require state agencies

[HB626](#) – Representative Bruce Williamson (R-Monroe) - Income tax; revise definition of force majeure relative to tax credits for jobs associated with large-scale projects to include a pandemic

[HB627](#) – Representative Rhonda Taylor (D-Conyers) - Property; landlord and tenant;

repeal Code Section 44-7-19

[HB628](#) – Representative Matt Reeves (R-Duluth) - Property; revise exemption for a debtor's aggregate interest in real property or personal property; provisions

[HB637](#) – Representative Bill Hitchens (R-Rincorn) - Fireworks; certain days and times for lawful use or ignition; provide

[HB651](#) – Representative Devan Seabaugh (R-Marietta) - Fireworks; local governments to regulate times when used; authorize

[HB653](#) – Representative Josh Bonner (R-Fayetteville) - Professions and businesses; prohibit health care providers from performing practices on minors to alter their appearance relating to gender

[HB655](#) – Representative Ron Stephens (R-Savannah) - Insurance; tax credits to be used by insurance companies against state insurance premium tax liability for contributing money to a nonlapsing flood disaster fund; provide

[HB679](#) - Rep. Sandra Scott (D-Rex) - deals with protecting individuals from discrimination in housing, public accommodations, and employment. Prohibits discrimination in housing and provides for equal enjoyment of and privileges to public accommodations. Adds in sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes in relation to public officers and employees.

House Resolutions

[HR281](#) – Representative Phil Alaleye (D-Atlanta) - House Study Committee on Lottery Revenues, Reserves, and Educational Programs; create

[HR324](#) – Representative Penny Houston (R-Nashville) - House Study Committee on the Jobs Tax Credit Tier System; create

[HR348](#) – Representative Deborah Silcox (R-Sandy Springs) - House Study Committee on Excessive Vehicle Noise and Related Crimes; create

[HR413](#) – Representative Charlice Byrd (R-Woodstock) - State of Georgia; paramount right to life of all human beings as persons at any stage of development; recognize - CA

Senate Bills

[SR147](#) – Senator Derek Mallow (D-Savannah) - Senate Local Option Sales Tax Study Committee; create

[SR203](#) – Senator Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur) - Senate Safe Firearm Storage Study Committee; create

[SR214](#) – Senator Frank Ginn (R-Danielsville) - Joint Study Committee on Local Option Sales Tax and Service Delivery Strategy; create

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GHLA Full Legislative Tracking Update

Please [click here to go to our Legislative tracking page](#) for the complete list of bills we are watching.