



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



March 17, 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 32-35. The legislature will reconvene on Monday, March 20 for Day 36 and be in session through Thursday, March 23 for Day 38 with a committee workday on Wednesday March 22. 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.

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

Supplemental Budget Signed by Governor

HB 18, the state's supplemental budget for FY 23, passed both Chambers and the General Assembly and was signed by the Governor this week. [Click here for footage of the press conference.](#)

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.

GHLA Priority Legislation Clears House Committee

[SB 127](#), sponsored by Sen. Billy Hickman (R-Statesboro), 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 SB 127, GHLA's priority legislation, passed unanimously out of Ways & Means without any amendments. This bill will now head to the House Rules Committee to be eligible for a House floor vote.

C-PACE Financing Legislation

[HB 206](#) by Rep. Steven Sainz (R-St. Mary's), was the final bill to pass the Georgia House on Crossover Day and received its first hearing in Senate State and Local Governmental Operations committee this week.

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.

Sports Betting Legislation Resurfaces

[HB 237](#), by Rep. Leesa Hagan (R-Lyons), a bill to designate the Southeast Soap Box Derby as the state's official soapbox derby, was altered by the Senate Economic Development Committee this week. Rather than passing the underlying bill, the committee substituted the language to authorize sports betting. Sports betting was originally proposed in [SB 57](#), but failed on the Senate Floor. HB 237 is now in Senate Rules and will be eligible to move forward for a floor vote in the coming days.

Proposed Ban on Booting

This week the Senate Public Safety Committee substituted [HB 119](#), a bill originally relating to the uniform rules of the road, with language to preempt ordinances that allow for booting vehicles in the state. This policy was originally proposed in [SB 247](#) by Sen. Josh McLaurin (D-Sandy Springs). The committee heard testimony on the legal concerns surrounding immobilizing vehicles, as well as opposition testimony from parking lot management companies and private business owners. This bill is now in Senate Rules.

Electric Vehicle Legislation Clears Committee

[SB 146](#), by Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega), was heard this week by the House Technology and Infrastructure Innovation Committee where it remains for committee approval.

[HB 406](#), by Rep. Rick Jasperse (R-Jasper), was passed unanimously by the Senate Regulated Industries Committee this week and heads to Senate Rules.

Both bills include similar proposals and are supported by all stakeholders:

- Allows for sale of electricity by kilowatt hour
- Allows for inspection and parameters on all EV charging stations by GA Dept. of Agriculture

- Authorizes collection of excise tax to make up for anticipated motor fuel tax loss
- Clarifies that if Georgia Power wants to expand footprint beyond the Territorial Act, law will require creation of a separate subsidiary

Third-Party Food Delivery Language Returns

This week the Senate Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee added third-party floor delivery language to [HB 528](#) by Rep. Houston Gaines (R-Athens), a proposal on online account renewal transparency. The third-party food delivery language was originally proposed in [SB 34](#) by Sen. Elena Parent (D-Atlanta). The bill places guardrails on third-party delivery companies, requires an agreement between the restaurant and the delivery company, as well as a food safe container. This bill is now in Senate Rules.

Legislative Tracking Update

House Bills

[HB696](#) – Representative Teri Anulewicz (D-Smyrna) - Smyrna, City of; annexation of certain territory; provide

[HB697](#) – Representative James Beverly (D-Macon) - State government; require preparation and distribution of a regulatory impact analysis prior to adopting, amending, or repealing any regulatory rule

[HB 718](#) - by Rep. Edna Jackson- to levy an excise tax in City of Savannah.

[HB 719](#)- by Rep. Yasmin Neal - to repeal the provision banning local governments from enforcing rent control.

[HB 735](#) - by Rep. Stan Gunter - to levy an excise tax in City of Hiwassee.

[HB 740](#) - by Rep. Al Williams - to levy an excise tax in City of Hinesville.

House Resolutions

[HR438](#) – Representative Darlene Taylor (R-Thomasville) - House Study Committee on the Okefenokee Swamp; create

[HR520](#) – Representative Sharron Cooper (R-Marietta) - Employment First Georgia Council; develop recommendations on how to transition current use of sub-minimum wage practices to employment options for people with developmental disabilities; urge

Senate Bills

[SB282](#) - by Senator Brian Strickland (R-McDonough) - prohibits employers from preventing an employee from engaging in certain protected activities related to the reporting of violations or of noncompliance with law, rule, or regulation. Prohibits retaliation against employees. Provides for a cause of action and remedies.

[SB283](#) - by Senator Brian Strickland (R-McDonough) - provides for reasonable accommodations to job applicants and employees related to pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions.

[SB295](#) – Senator Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega) - A BILL to be entitled an Act to authorize the governing authority of Lumpkin County to levy an excise tax pursuant to subsection (b) of Code Section 48-13-51 of the O.C.G.A.; to provide for procedures, conditions, and limitations; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

[SB299](#) – Senator Derek Mallow (D-Savannah) - City of Port Wentworth; to levy an excise tax; authorize

Senate Resolutions

[SR275](#) – Senator John Albers (R-Roswell) - Senate Study Committee on Expanding Georgia's Workforce; create

[SR296](#) – Senator Sonya Halpern (D-Atlanta) - Senate Study Committee on Excessive Vehicle Noise and Related Crimes; create

[SR308](#) – Senator Lee Anderson (R-Grovetown) - Senate Study Committee on Recycling Efficiency and Economic Development; create

[SR314](#) – Senator Jason Anaviitarte (R-Dallas) - Senate Study Committee on the Benefits of Solar Energy in Georgia; create

[SR334](#) – Senator John Kennedy (R-Macon) - Rules of the Senate; amend

GHLA Full Legislative Tracking Update

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