



## **Georgia Chamber of Commerce Legislative Update: February 22**

**February 22, 2010**

For a complete listing of all bills being tracked by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce this year, or contact information for elected officials, visit [www.gachamber.com](http://www.gachamber.com).

### **Budget Recess**

The General Assembly has recessed until March 8<sup>th</sup> in order for the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to focus on the Fiscal Year 2011 budget. Revenue figures for January 2010 were lower than anticipated and all areas of state government are likely facing deeper cuts than originally proposed. At this time, legislative leaders remain focused on reducing expenses, rather than increasing taxes on Georgia citizens and businesses. That said, the tax on hospitals and health plans included in Governor Perdue's proposed budget -- and opposed by the Georgia Chamber -- will likely be a key part of the debate over the next two weeks.

### **Transportation**

The Governor's transportation funding bill (HB1218) was filed last week and is expected to be reviewed by the House and Senate Transportation Committees during the recess, as will a bill introduced earlier this month by Democratic leaders. While both proposals call for regional TSPLOSTs to fund transportation projects, they differ in a number of key areas, including how regions and project lists are defined and when the tax referendum would be held. Given the commitment of both parties and the unity of legislative leadership on this critical issue, the Georgia Chamber remains hopeful that legislation will be passed this year.

### **Water**

During the recess, legislators will also be meeting to discuss the Georgia Water Stewardship Act of 2010 (SB 370, HB 1094), which follows recommendations made by the Water Contingency Task Force in late 2009 to increase supply and reduce demand for this finite resource. Among other things, the bill would implement requirements for high-efficiency plumbing fixtures in new construction beginning in 2012 and charge a number of state agencies with developing incentives for both conservation and supply at the local level.

### **Education**

Senate Bill 84, which includes the recommendations made by the Commission for School Board Excellence to improve school board governance throughout the state, was passed by the House Education Committee last week and will be up for a vote by the full House when legislators convene on March 8.