



AIA
Georgia

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GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS

Jan. 16 - Jan. 19, 2018

Week 2

WEEKLY REPORT

Once again, winter weather disrupted the flow of the Legislative Session. Legislators were out on Monday in observance of the Martin Luther King Day holiday. On Tuesday, they met for budget hearings. Tuesday night the snow started to fall! All activity at the Capitol was canceled on Wednesday.

This included a series of budget hearings and various other legislative activities. The Legislature reconvened on Thursday for Day 5 of the Legislative Session and then completed Day 6 on Friday.

There was not a lot of bill movement this week. The focus of this week was on hearing budget presentations from departments and kicking off the appropriations process. We expect the House to have their changes to the Amended Fiscal Year (AFY) 2018 budget ready by the end of the month.

AMAZON UPDATE

On Thursday, Amazon announced its list of 20 finalists in its decision on where to locate its second headquarters. The first being in Seattle. From the original 238 bids, Atlanta is on the shortlist. Joining Atlanta are Austin, Boston, Chicago, Columbus (Ohio), Dallas, Denver, Indianapolis, LA, Miami, Montgomery (Maryland), Nashville, Newark, NY, Northern Virginia, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Raleigh (NC), Toronto and Washington.



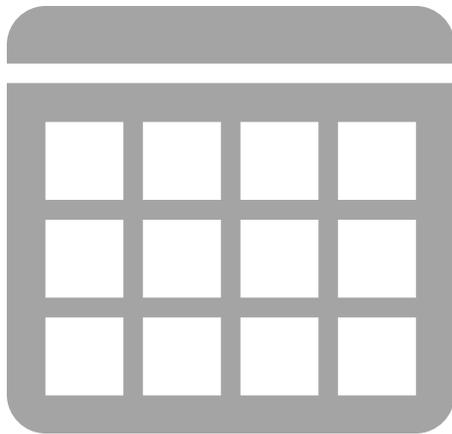
Atlanta hopes to be the recipient of \$5 Billion in development investment and over 50,000 jobs. Governor Deal sweetened the deal last week by announcing he would call a special legislative session to work out an incentive deal if a location in Georgia is among the final three contenders. Georgia is the top state to do business in the country and we certainly hope this is recognized by Amazon.

New Senator, Representative, and Floor Leaders

The Senate welcomed its newest Senator this week, Senator Brian Strickland. Senator Strickland is replacing Rick Jeffares who resigned his seat to run for Lt. Governor. The House welcomed its newest member, Geoff Cauble. Representative Cauble is replacing Brian Strickland. In addition to welcoming new members of each chamber, Governor Deal announced his new floor leaders this week. This years floor leaders include Representatives Chuck Efration, Trey Rhodes, Terry Rogers and Senators Brian Strickland, PK Martin and Larry Walker.

Schedule

Here is the schedule through Day 11. We expect to get the next installment of the adjournment resolution within the next week.



(January 16-18: Joint appropriations hearings)

Monday, January 22 – Legislative Day 7

Tuesday, January 23 – Legislative Day 8

Wednesday, January 24 – Legislative Day 9

Thursday, January 25 – Legislative Day 10

Monday, January 29 – Legislative Day 11

Adoption Legislation

As we mentioned last week, the first bill that received significant attention was the adoption bill, HB 159. The bill is designed to update and streamline Georgia's adoption laws, with a goal to reduce the amount of time children spend in foster care.

Last year, a last-minute Senate amendment to include language that was viewed as discriminatory to LGBT families caused the bill to stall without resolution. The discriminatory language has been removed from the bill but there is still some language included that mirrors a bill that was vetoed by Governor Deal last year. The bill has to do with power of attorney to “agents”. The Governors’ veto was on account that this provision supersedes the well-defined role of DFACS.

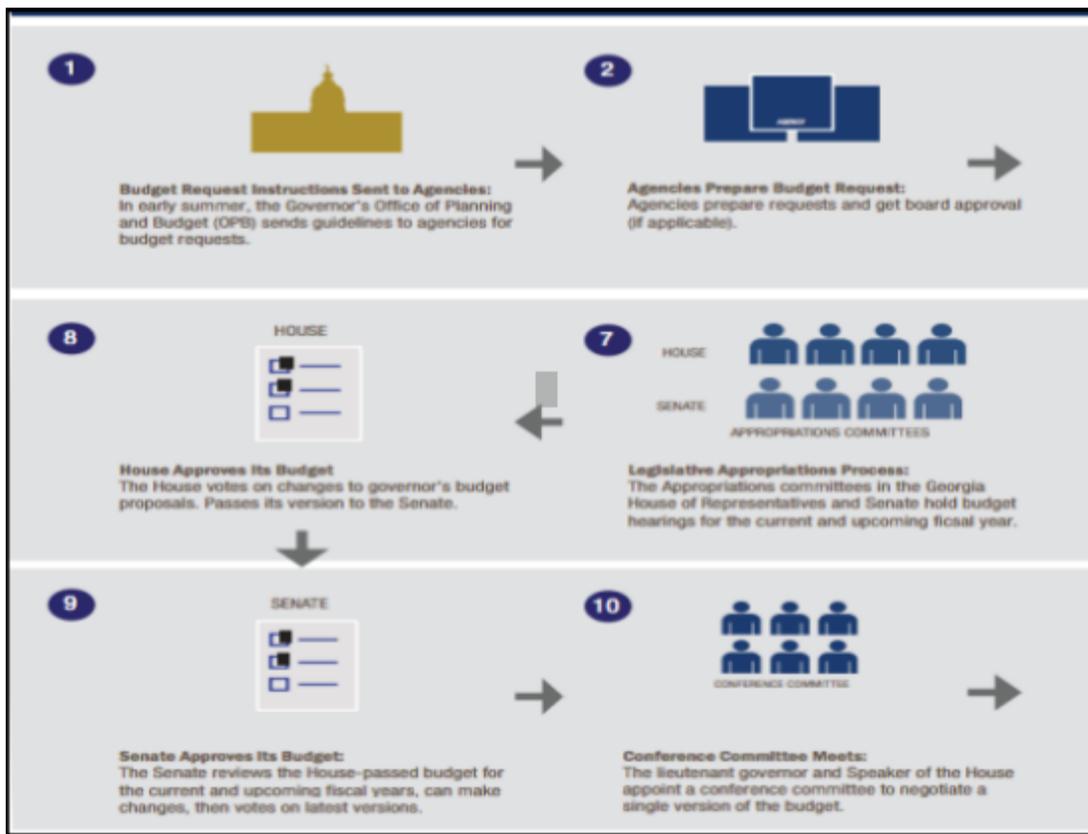
This bill was the lone bill on the floor in the Senate on Day 5. After much discussion, the bill passed 40-13. Representative Bert Reeves, the bill sponsor, has indicated his distaste with the Senate amendments. We expect this fight to continue as the legislative session moves forward.

Budget

With many department presentations being cancelled this week, budget hearings will continue into next week.

We heard from the Department of Education, Technical College System of Georgia, the Department of Community Health, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Georgia Student Finance Commission and the Secretary of State. The Georgia Department of Transportation is scheduled to present their budget requests on Monday at 4:00 PM.

Most of the presenters indicated their Departments are in good shape while they also all showed the need for additional funding. The budget process is a long one which is why it begins so early. The process is also important – the budget is the only constitutionally required bill that must pass during a legislative session. Here is an illustration of the route the budget will take to its final passage.



AIA - Specific Issues and Legislation of Interest

Below are the bills we are watching closely. You can also find an attached spreadsheet with a comprehensive list of bills we are following.

Transportation Chairmen Kevin Tanner and Brandon Beach each have a transit bill they will be dropping.

We have been working with the land surveyors on a bill they will be putting forth this year. The bill deals with the use of drones making it so if you use drones on a project that requires surveying that you use a licensed surveyor. We have worked with them on a carve-out to ensure that contractors can use drones on their own projects for their own purposes with the understanding that the data cannot be "sold" to another entity. We will continue working with the surveyors on this language so it is crystal clear. This bill is likely to drop next week.

We also anticipate a series of bills addressing recommendations from the Rural Development Council. We expect to see a version of SB 2 – the permitting streamlining bill from last year. This will likely be in the form of a new bill.

HB 653: This bill is by Representative Jason Spencer. The bill makes it so that professional licensing boards are authorized but not required to suspend the license of a person upon the default of a federal education loan. This bill is in the Regulated Industries Committee.

We will keep you updated as legislation is dropped or moved that will affect AIA.

Contact Us

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