



House Budget and Research Office

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2024 SESSION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Georgia remains the #1 state in which to do business as named by *Area Development Magazine* for 10 consecutive years. According to the Department of Economic Development¹, Georgia experienced \$196 billion in total trade in FY 2023, a growth of 40% over the last five years; \$47 billion in Georgia exports, a 25% increase over the last decade; and \$39.8 billion in visitor spending, an increase of 13% over FY 2022.

Budget Highlights

- In HB 915, the Amended FY 2024 budget, the General Assembly provides \$250,000 for equipment and vehicles to begin implementation of the Georgia Electric Vehicle Charging Program pursuant to SB 146 (2023 Session). These funds are continued in HB 916, the FY 2025 budget.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget provides \$2 million to implement the Georgia Farmland Conservation Fund. The fund will award matching grants to support farmland conservation, food and farming production, or the purchase of agricultural conservation easement.
- The Amended FY 2024 budget provides \$29.2 million to the Georgia World Congress Center Authority for public safety, security, and infrastructure costs related to hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2025 College Playoff National Championship. These events are expected to bring massive tourism to Georgia.
- HB 915 provides \$100 million to the Regional Economic Business Assistance (REBA) program for economic development projects and \$100 million to the OneGeorgia Authority for rural economic and site development. These programs help to make Georgia more attractive to businesses seeking to expand or relocate.
- The General Assembly supports the governor's recommendation in the Amended FY 2024 budget to provide \$250 million to the Georgia Fund for low-interest loans for water and wastewater infrastructure development in local communities.
- HB 916 includes \$1 million for the Department of Community Affairs to create the accountable housing initiative. The initiative, under the State Housing Trust Fund, provides funds for organizations that help homeless individuals obtain stable, immediate housing in the short-term and achieve affordable housing in the long-term. This is in addition to the \$3.7 million provided to the State Housing Trust Fund to improve homelessness services in the FY 2025 budget and \$2.9 million in the Amended FY 2024 budget provided to leverage federal funds for a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

¹Most recently available numbers provided by the Georgia Department of Economic Development are for FY 2023.

- The General Assembly agrees with the governor to provide \$23.9 million to continue the Rural Workforce Housing program in the Amended FY 2024 budget and \$6 million in the FY 2025 budget. The program provides funding for projects that address current workforce housing needs by the expansion or improvement of the housing stock.
- House Bill 915 provides the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with over \$1 million for flood and fire mitigation efforts on Sapelo Island and environmental clean-up on Ossabaw Island, as well as \$650,000 to help eradicate invasive species. HB 916 includes \$4 million for Tybee Island beach restoration.
- The General Assembly recommends providing the Secretary of State’s Office with over \$1.5 million in FY 2025 for a comprehensive overhaul of the Professional Licensing Boards Division to include an additional 17 employees, temporary staff to address the current backlog of license applications and appeals, and related equipment and operating expenses.

Legislative Highlights

- [HB 353](#) (Rep. Alan Powell, 33rd) makes any regulations promulgated by the Georgia Lottery Corporation subject to the 'Georgia Administrative Procedure Act', and makes hearings under O.C.G.A. 50-27-102 subject to the 'Georgia Arbitration Code'.

The bill requires that the Georgia Lottery Corporation must provide for a shortfall reserve that is at least 50 percent of the average amount of net proceeds deposited into the account for the preceding three years, which is defined as the “minimum reserve”. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, if the total reserve fund balance exceeds the minimum reserve, an amount equal to 10 percent of the excess reserve funds shall be appropriated for educational purposes.

For Class A coin-operated amusement machines, the maximum amount that can be redeemed per play is set at \$50. Licenses for manufacturers, distributors, master licensees, or location licensees can be for between one and three years, at the option of the licensee.

From the effective date of the bill to July 1, 2026, nonreloadable gift cards will be allowed for redemption with Class A and B coin-operated amusement machines. Beginning on July 1, 2026, only replays and nonreloadable and reloadable gift cards will be used for redemption for Class A machines. Only replays, lottery products, and nonreloadable and reloadable gift cards will be permitted for redemption for Class B machines.

Further, any time a license is revoked due to settlement, the Georgia Lottery Corporation must put the license up for public auction. The corporation must also create a procedure in which any person can inquire about an official interpretation of a rule or regulation. The bill increases the percentage of net receipts that the corporation must keep for Class B accounting terminations to 13 percent, as well as revising other requirements for master licensees.

- [HB 808](#) (Rep. Mike Cheokas, 151st) amends O.C.G.A. 48-5-42.1, relating to the personal property tax exemption, to change the ad valorem taxation exemption on tangible personal property from \$7,500 to \$20,000. The bill must receive a 2/3 majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and subsequently be approved by Georgia voters during the November 5, 2024 general election.

- [HB 1041](#) (Rep. Ron Stephens, 164th) increases the maximum bond indebtedness of the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority from \$50 million to \$400 million.
- [HB 1023](#) (Rep. Bruce Williamson, 112th) amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-21, relating to taxation of corporations, to change the rate of taxable net income for corporations from 5.75 percent to the same rate as the individual income tax rate in the corresponding year. The bill further amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-57, relating to filing dates and failure to file for corporate taxpayers, to allow for an additional month to file a state return beyond an extension provided related to a federal income tax return.
- [HB 1026](#) (Rep. Leesa Hagan, 156th) designates the Southeast Georgia Soap Box Derby in Lyons as the official soap box derby of the State of Georgia. It also establishes the 'Richard H. Smith Georgia CHIPS Advancement in Research and Development Act'. The bill creates a fund to provide grant and loan programs to attract semiconductor companies to Georgia, and a fund for workforce education and training grants related to careers in semiconductors, microelectronics, and respective laboratories.
- [HB 1341](#) (Rep. Steven Sainz, 180th) designates the white shrimp as the official crustacean of the State of Georgia.
- [HR 1435](#) (Rep. Ron Stephens, 164th) urges the State of Georgia and the Department of Economic Development to support the Vince Dooley Battlefield Preservation Fund as part of the Georgia US250 Committee's observance of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.
- [SB 362](#) (Sen. Mike Hodges, 3rd) prohibits companies that receive economic development incentives from: voluntarily granting recognition rights for the employees solely on the basis of signed labor organization authorization cards, if a secret ballot could have been used; voluntarily disclosing an employee's personal contact information to a labor organization without prior consent; or requiring a subcontractor to engage in these activities.

Any employer who receives economic incentives and engages in any of the prohibited conduct will be required to repay all economic incentives received over the life of the project. This applies to any agreement between the state and an employer starting on January 1, 2025. The Department of Community Affairs is authorized to investigate allegations of prohibited conduct if the company receives economic incentives.

- [SB 496](#) (Sen. Max Burns, 23rd) amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.8, relating to tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic structures, to extend the sunset date of the program to December 31, 2029 and clarify the definition of a historic building or structure to require the structure to be certified by the Department of Community Affairs as having met certain criteria. The bill amends O.C.G.A. 48-7-40.32, relating to revitalization zone tax credits, to extend the sunset date of the program to December 31, 2032.