

*On Friday, legislators worked into the wee hours of the night in their last attempt to get legislation out of its originating chamber. Day 30, more commonly known as 'Crossover Day', is the last day in the 40 day session that a legislator has to be present a bill before his or her chamber and have it voted out before it is considered dead. Because of the frantic nature of this day, the debate calendars of both the Senate and House tend to be slightly longer than normal. The Georgia Forestry Association was fortunate enough to have its amendment to the Forest Land Protection Act clear the House of Representatives and the committee process in the Senate well before day 30.*



Members of the House of Representatives work late into the night on Friday as Day 30 draws to a close.

*Most of the legislation monitored by GFA (listed below) will not be eligible for the remainder of the 2010 session, and will no longer be reported on. There are now only 10 legislative days remaining...*

## Issue Watch

**Senate Bill 409** by Senate Finance Chairman **Ronnie Chance** (R-Tyrone) requires that when subsidies are granted for new industries on the purchase of raw materials, those same incentives will be given to existing businesses. The bill was the last item voted on by the full Senate Tuesday and passed unanimously by a vote of 44 to 0. SB The bill will now enter the House where it will be carried by Rep. **Ron Stephens** (R-Savannah). GFA supports this bill.

GFA's legislative priority for the 2010 session, **House Bill 1028** by House Transportation Chairman **Jay Roberts** (R-Ocilla), will amend the Forest Land Protection Act to remove obstacles to enrollment related to potential liability of an owner of land in a covenant who sells or transfers a portion of the property to someone who later breaches the covenant. Senator **Ross Tolleson** (R-Perry) will request in the Senate Rules Committee tomorrow afternoon that HB 1028 be placed on the Senate's debate calendar Wednesday.

*The following bills did not pass out of their originating chamber by day 30, and must be reintroduced next session should the sponsor choose to pursue the issue.*

**House Bill 1267** by Rep. **Tom Weldon** (R-Ringgold) would increase the penalty for timber harvests where the defendant is a willful trespasser to 3 times the full value of the property at the time, in addition to punitive damages and attorney fees; where the defendant is an unintentional purchaser to 3 times the value at the time of conversion, also covering the attorney fees of the damaged party; and where the defendant is a purchaser without notice from a willful trespasser to the value of the timber at the time of removal, in addition to the damaged party's attorney fees. **HB 1267 did not pass out of the House Civil Judiciary Subcommittee.**

**House Bill 1218** by Rep. **Jim Cole** (the Governors' Transportation Act of 2010) would have let regions decide whether to levy a one cent sales tax to fund projects, but the bill was dropped in favor of a more comprehensive transportation bill from last session, **House Bill 277** by former House Transportation Chairman and current DOT Commissioner Vance Smith. The House and Senate will now negotiate on HB 277, as it made it out of its original chamber by day 30 last year. **HB 1218 did not pass out of the full House of Representatives.**

**House Bill 1008** by Rep. **Allen Peake** (R-Macon) would extend the time during which the price of various forms of energy used by manufacturers is capped for purposes of the state sales tax. The caps were established in 2008 and will expire December 31, 2010. **HB 1008 did not pass out of the Ways & Means Sales Tax Subcommittee.**

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## **2010 Regional Water Councils underway**

The regional water councils for the Statewide Water Management Plan have already begun their meetings for 2010. The schedule can be accessed by logging on to [www.georgiawaterplanning.org](http://www.georgiawaterplanning.org) and clicking on your region (the map of Georgia on the right side of the homepage breaks the state into 11 regions). The site is an excellent source of information detailing what each region did in 2009 as well as what it hopes to accomplish in 2010. Let's make sure forestry's voice is heard as the state moves to adopt a comprehensive water management plan.

## **Political Tidbits**

Shortly after the United States House of Representatives voted on the president's health care reform bill last week, Congressman **Nathan Deal** from Gainesville announced his resignation (Deal had originally intended to resign last month, but remained in office long enough to vote on the highly controversial bill). The Governor and Secretary of State have set May 11<sup>th</sup> as the special election date to fill Congressman Deals' 9<sup>th</sup> district seat.

State Senator **Lee Hawkins** and Representative **Tom Graves**, two republican candidates vying for the vacant seat, resigned their respective seats so that they may campaign full time until the election.

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***Don't forget: GFA's Regional Meetings begin next month. Be sure to check the regional meeting page of [www.gfagrow.org](http://www.gfagrow.org) to find out when one will be held in your area.***

For more information on the Georgia General Assembly, including contact information for your Representative and Senator, visit the Georgia Forestry Association website at [www.gfagrow.org](http://www.gfagrow.org) and click on Georgia General Assembly under the **Links** tab, or under the **Government Affairs** tab you may go to 'Contact Your Legislator', a particularly helpful resource if you are uncertain of the members in your local legislative delegation.

Archived *Capitol Forestry Reports* can be found on GFA's homepage, [www.gfagrow.org](http://www.gfagrow.org).

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