



## Georgia Chapter

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Footnotes Issue #54: February 22nd, 2012

### 2012 Georgia Water Coalition Capitol Conservation Day



Want to come down and see how the sausage is made under the Gold Dome, live and in person, and maybe even influence it? [Register for Georgia Water Coalition's Capitol Conservation Day](#) on Tuesday, February 28.

Issues that are likely to be at the top of the agenda (of course, subject to change) include SB 269 and SB 415, which our lobbyist describes as follows: Senator Jeffares of Locust Grove ran into a bit of trouble with SB 269 on Wednesday, February 15, when his bill was set for consideration by the Senate. SB 269 was recommitted to the Rules Committee for more work. Because SB 269 would have eased penalties for water pollution, and because of recent disastrous pollution spills in GA waters, it seemed that the bill could not muster the 29 votes it would need to pass the Senate.

It is thought that Senator Jeffares may seek to offer a Floor Substitute for SB 269 that includes some provisions that protect water quality from disastrous spills like that hitting the Ogeechee River last year, that killed 38,000 fish. Many Senators were told by their constituents that "38,000 Fish Say No to SB 269."

Possible compromises include a clear definition of "emergencies" and strict instructions as to the appropriate regulatory response to them. Also limits on who could take advantage of the SB 269 plan to allow fines and penalties to be used to fix water quality problems, and who can borrow from the state for that purpose.

Senator Jeffares, who works for the G. Ben Turnipseed Engineering Co., which is primarily a firm serving smaller water and sewer systems around the state, has introduced another bill dealing with this aspect of government. SB 415 rewrites the current law governing the permitting of sewer plants to require permits only to operate such plants—not to build them.

This is a curious idea, since it seems to encourage developers to plunge into building facilities that can be costly and may not qualify for operating permits. Under current law, with permits required for construction, the ability of the proposed waste disposal waters must be established before a plant is built.

Perhaps developers think they can bully the EPD into granting operating permits because they have already made an investment in plant? Maybe they want to claim that denial of an operating permit for their new plant is a violation of their property rights—that it is a "taking" of their property. This bill could open the door to all sorts of expense for taxpayers, for no good reason.

### Quick Links



Several of you wrote in despair after reading [Footnotes Issue #52 Will Solar in Georgia Ever](#)

[Break Through?](#) because you wanted something you could do to make a difference. Well, a few weeks later, you are in luck. Senator Buddy Carter (R-Pooler) and a bipartisan coalition of Senate Leadership has introduced [SB 401](#), which would remove the restrictions on solar. Read more about it in the [AJC article](#) last week, or the [Athens Banner Herald article](#) earlier this week.

Georgia Power, the EMCs, and the Georgia Chamber are opposing this bill, and your Senator needs to hear from you. [Click here to send them a message asking them to support Solar Freedom in Georgia.](#)

## Sierra Club Meetings

**Beyond Factory Farming**, no February Meeting, Leah Garces - Chair,  
[Leah.Garces@ciwf.org](mailto:Leah.Garces@ciwf.org)

**RAIL**, Monday, February 27, 7:00 p.m., David Emory - Chair,  
[david.emory@gmail.com](mailto:david.emory@gmail.com)

**Atlanta Inner City Outings (ICO)**, Tuesday, February 29, 7:30 p.m., Naomi Bock, [atlantaico@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaico@gmail.com)

**Smart Energy Team Meeting**, Monday, March 5, 7:00 p.m., Mike Walls - Chair,  
[mwalls@elijay.com](mailto:mwalls@elijay.com)

**Wildlands and Wildlife Committee Meeting**, Tuesday, March 20, 7:00 p.m.,  
Mike Murdock - Chair, [murdock1@mindspring.com](mailto:murdock1@mindspring.com)

**Fundraising Committee Meeting**, Wednesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m., Clay Tucker  
- Chair, [tuckerwf12@aol.com](mailto:tuckerwf12@aol.com)

## Upcoming Events

### Good Jobs Green Jobs Conference - February 22-23



Now in its fifth year, the [Good Jobs, Green Jobs Conference](#) -- the nation's leading forum for sharing ideas and strategies to build a green economy and create good, green jobs -- is headed to Atlanta! The conference will feature two days of exciting speakers and informative workshops, bringing together community leaders, union members, environmentalists, business leaders, and elected officials to discuss how each region is, block by block, building the foundation for a green

economy.

### Chattahoochee-Oconee Forest Trail Assessment Survey - Deadline March 2nd

Do you hike in Georgia's National Forests? If so, help the USFS with a trails assessment project where they are assessing 220+ miles of non-motorized trail in four Georgia Ranger Districts. The information that you provide in this survey will be used to guide the consultants' field assessment of each of these trails, as well as the final recommendations regarding each of these trails. Take the [survey](#).



### Greenprints Conference March 7-8



Now in its 15th year, [Greenprints](#) is a high-level forum for the sustainability-driven conversations that define our times. A gathering place for regionally and nationally renowned building science and design experts, as well as building industry

professionals, Greenprints facilitates conversations between researchers and on-the-ground practitioners.



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