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Footnotes Issue #55: March 5th, 2012

## Put the Trust back in the Trust Funds: SB 811 Stalled in Senate Appropriations

A bill strongly supported by conservationists now pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee is HB 811, the "fees bill," that seeks to resolve the years-old problem created by the legislature's willingness to pass laws collecting fees to support various programs, and then stealing the funds collected for use in other, unrelated expenditures.

HB 811 is an attempt to stop the looting of these program funds by simply stopping the collection of any fees not appropriated to the programs under which they were collected. If 20% or more of the funds collected in any year are not appropriated to the program under which they were collected, then the affected fee is cut by that amount automatically the next year. The incentive to dip into the funds is countered by the fact that opportunities for such looting are diminished each time it is done.

HB 811 was passed by the House with only 5 votes in dissent. The bill came through the House Governmental Affairs Committee, but the Lt. Gov. did not assign it to the equivalent Senate Committee, State and Local Government Operations. Cagle sent HB 811 to the Appropriations Committee, one of the sites of the looting described above, so that it would die there.

**Sierrans need to contact Sen. Jack Hill, Chair of Senate Appropriations, at his Capitol office at 404-656-5038**, to urge that HB 811 be passed to the Senate Floor for vote, and enactment, so that the Solid Waste Trust Fund will be available for cleaning up tire dumps all over Georgia, and the Hazardous Waste Trust Fund can be employed cleaning up the state's toxic sites that are contaminating groundwater.

One important reason the Sierra Club supports HB 811 is to remove a huge barrier to passage of wastewater permit and discharge fees. 39 states have such fees which support their water protection programs. Georgia has no wastewater discharge fee which results in disasters such as the recent Ogeechee River fish kill, worst in state history. 38,000 dead fish say pass HB 811!

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## Quick Links



On Saturday, the [Marietta Daily Journal](#) reported on the Cobb EMC Board meeting where the Board voted to pull out of POWER4Georgians (P4G) and the proposed Plant Washington coal-fired power

plant near Sandersville. Dean Alford, whose Allied Energy Services was once a subsidiary of Cobb Energy, won a no-bid contract to develop Plant Washington said that P4G never intended to build Plant Washington. He stated P4G's goal has always been to obtain the permits needed and then sell them to any interested party that could build the plant. Snapping Shoals, Central Georgia, Washington and Upson EMCs, what are you waiting for? No investor wants to buy a permit for a coal-fired power plant!

## Sierra Club Meetings

**Smart Energy Team Meeting**, Monday, March 12, 7:00 p.m., Mike Walls - Chair, [mwalls@ellijay.com](mailto:mwalls@ellijay.com)

**Beyond Factory Farming**, Monday, March 12 7:00 p.m., Leah Garces - Chair, [Leah.Garces@ciwf.org](mailto:Leah.Garces@ciwf.org)

**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)

**RAIL**, Monday, March 26, 7:00 p.m., David Emory - Chair, [david.emory@gmail.com](mailto:david.emory@gmail.com)

**Atlanta Inner City Outings (ICO)**, Tuesday, March 27, 7:30 p.m., Naomi Bock, [atlantaico@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaico@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Events

### Cobb EMC Owners Association Candidate Endorsements - March 6-13

The Cobb EMC Owners Association (CEOA) will begin their final series of vetting sessions to select the CEOA endorsed candidates for EMC Service Areas 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9. All Cobb EMC customer and members are eligible to vote for every Area, regardless of which one you live in. The vetting sessions will all be conducted at Butch Thompson's office at 2131 Moon Station Drive, Kennesaw on Tuesday, March 6, Thursday, March 8, and Tuesday, March 13. Bring your photo ID and your power bill. [Sign up with Sierra Club](#) to let us know you will be there supporting our green energy candidates.



### 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.

### Park Pride Annual Conference - March 26

Park Pride's 11th Annual [Parks and Greenspace Conference](#) promises to be the most ground breaking yet. Across the country, long-forgotten transportation corridors are being re-imagined as greenspaces. While The Atlanta BeltLine is the most notable local example of gray infrastructure becoming a green amenity, there are many success stories of communities looking to re-purpose neglected or even active highway corridors into park-like networks of trails and wildlife corridors.



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