

Plumbing and Mechanical Association of Georgia

Legislative Report

February 15, 2008

The General Assembly recessed yesterday and will reconvene on Tuesday for its 19th legislative day.

New water bill includes retrofit incentive.

A major new water bill backed by House leadership was introduced yesterday and referred to the Natural Resources Committee. HB 1226 was sponsored by Representative Mike Coan of Lawrenceville.

Included in this 50-page bill is a provision for income tax credits for the installation of water conservation equipment in new construction or retrofits. The amount of the tax credit would be set by the Board of Natural Resources not to exceed 25 percent of the cost or \$2,000, whichever is less. Credits would be transferable by the taxpayer to a homebuilder, re-modeler, manufacturer, seller or installer of qualified equipment.

HB 1226 would create a new Water Supply Division within the Department of Natural Resources, with a director reporting to the DNR Board. The Environmental Protection Division would be required to transfer appropriate staff to the new Water Supply Division. The new division would be the state's primary liaison with the U.S. Corps of Engineers and would be responsible for at least some of the oversight of the Comprehensive Statewide Water Plan. In addition, the Water Supply Division would be charged with developing reservoirs to meet the state's future water needs.

Because it is backed by the Speaker and other House leaders, HB 1226 may take priority over the retrofit bills previously introduced. However, those retrofit bills are in the Ways & Means Committee, while HB 1226 is in the Natural Resources Committee. The Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, Rep. Lynn Smith is among the bill's co-sponsors. Other co-sponsors include Rep. Tom McCall, chairman of the Water Resources Subcommittee, and Bob Hanner, the ranking Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee.

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