

Senate Resolution 604

By Senators Starr of the 44th, Dean of the 31st, Meyer von Bremen of the 12th, Hill of the 4th, Polak of the 42nd and others

**ADOPTED SENATE**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 Creating the Joint Study Committee on Alternative and Environmentally Sensitive Truck  
2 Fuels; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, air quality in metropolitan Atlanta and other areas of the state is unable to meet  
4 federal Clean Air Act standards; and

5 WHEREAS, the stigma of "nonattainment" hurts future economic development, threatens  
6 federal highway funding, and is the basis of lawsuits to stop or delay highway funding; and

7 WHEREAS, cleaner natural gas dual-fuel engines are currently available that will reduce  
8 emissions of medium and large-size trucks; and

9 WHEREAS, purchasing one medium or heavy duty natural gas truck (instead of diesel) will  
10 achieve the same Nox reduction as purchasing 149 natural gas passenger cars (instead of  
11 gasoline) or taking 62 gasoline cars off the road entirely; and

12 WHEREAS, lowering those emission levels will have a beneficial impact on air quality in  
13 metropolitan Atlanta and other urban areas of the state; and

14 WHEREAS, liquified natural gas is taxed at a higher volumetric (BTU equivalent) rate than  
15 petroleum due to the current motor fuel tax structure in Georgia; and

16 WHEREAS, equalization of the motor fuel tax structure will be revenue neutral since only  
17 as little as 1 percent of vehicles on the road are likely to change to natural gas engines and  
18 this will not negatively affect the state highway fund; and

19 WHEREAS, there are no incentives to customers to use cleaner-burning fuel and, because  
20 of higher effective fuel tax rates and equipment costs, there is in essence a disincentive; and

1 WHEREAS, private fleet owners would convert their trucks to, and invest in, dual-fuel  
2 engines if incentives existed to offset the initial cost of conversion, such as the tax rates for  
3 alternate fuels being at least equalized with petroleum so there is not a disincentive to use  
4 alternate fuels; and

5 WHEREAS, if the state policy was changed to encourage the use of alternate fuels by truck  
6 fleets, air quality and energy efficiency would be improved; and

7 WHEREAS, liquified natural gas (LNG) is a much safer fuel for employees and the public  
8 at large to be exposed to since it is not as combustible as diesel fuel and lighter than air; and

9 WHEREAS, spilled LNG will not contaminate soil or water, and it is stored under much  
10 lower pressure than CNG (100psi vs. 3000psi) and is therefore much safer in the event of  
11 tank damage sustained in a collision.

12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
13 GEORGIA that there is created the Joint Study Committee on Alternative and  
14 Environmentally Sensitive Truck Fuels to be composed of:

15 (1) Three members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the  
16 House, of which one shall be a member of the Ways and Means Committee, one shall be  
17 a member of the Transportation committee, and one shall be a member of the Natural  
18 Resources Committee;

19 (2) Three members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate, of which  
20 one shall be a member of the Appropriations Committee, one shall be a member of the  
21 Transportation Committee, and one shall be a member of the Finance and Public Utilities  
22 Committee; and

23 (3) One member of each of the following organizations to be appointed by the Governor:

24 (A) Clean Air Campaign;

25 (B) Sierra Club;

26 (C) Atlanta Regional Commission;

27 (D) Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce;

28 (E) Georgia Chamber of Commerce;

29 (F) Automobile manufacturers;

30 (G) Georgia Motor Truck Association;

31 (H) Highway Contractors Association;

32 (I) Georgia Equipment Distributors Association;

- (J) Georgia Department of Transportation;
- (K) Georgia Department of Revenue;
- (L) American Gas Association;
- (M) Georgia Auto Dealers Association;
- (N) Georgia Environmental Protection Division;
- (O) Georgia Public Service Commission;
- (P) MARTA;
- (Q) Georgia Agribusiness Council;
- (R) Georgia Poultry Federation;
- (S) Georgia Petroleum Council; and
- (T) Georgia Regional Transportation Authority.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate a member of the committee as chairperson of the committee. The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems mentioned above, including but not limited to:

- (1) Changing the motor fuel tax structure in order to equalize rates in which alternative fuels are taxed;
- (2) Promoting equitable taxation of and incentives for converting to alternative fuels;
- (3) Creating additional economic and other incentives to fleet owners to convert to alternative fuels, including, but not limited to:
  - (A) Tax credits for conversion; and
  - (B) Bid advantages for city, county, and state contracts;
- (4) Assistance in meeting current federally mandated deadlines regarding alternate fuel vehicles in their automotive fleet;
- (5) Promoting cleaner alternative truck fuels;
- (6) Promoting conversion, maintenance, and repair of dual-fuel truck engines;
- (7) Improved mobility of fleet by the ability to utilize HOV lanes, with the possibility of a special long term, low cost license plate for fleets, designating them as good corporate citizens and being environmentally sensitive; and
- (8) Investigating the cost of conversion to be able to use clean fuels.

The committee shall recommend any actions or legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The committee may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances

1 authorized for legislative members of interim legislative committees but shall receive the  
2 same for not more than five days unless additional days are authorized. The funds necessary  
3 to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds appropriated to the  
4 House of Representatives and to the Senate. In the event the committee makes a report of  
5 its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such  
6 report shall be made on or before December 31, 2002. The committee shall stand abolished  
7 on December 31, 2002.