

House Bill 944 (AM)

By: Representatives DeLoach of the 127th, Keen of the 146th, Mosley of the 129th, Post 1, Oliver of the 121st, Post 2, Barnard of the 121st, Post 1, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To create the Liberty County Public Facilities Authority and to provide for the appointment
2 of members of the Authority; to confer powers upon the Authority; to authorize the issuance
3 of revenue bonds of the Authority payable from the revenues, tolls, fees, charges, and
4 earnings of the Authority, contract payments to the Authority, and from other moneys
5 pledged therefor and to authorize the collection and pledging of the revenues, tolls, fees,
6 charges, earnings, and contract payments of the Authority for the payment of such revenue
7 bonds; to authorize the execution of resolutions and trust indentures to secure the payment
8 of the revenue bonds of the Authority and to define the rights of the holders of such
9 obligations; to make the revenue bonds of the Authority exempt from taxation; to fix and
10 provide the venue and jurisdiction of actions relating to any provisions of this Act; to provide
11 for the validation of bonds; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

13 **SECTION 1.**

14 Short title.

15 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Liberty County Public Facilities Authority
16 Act."

17 **SECTION 2.**

18 Liberty County Public Facilities Authority.

19 (a) There is hereby created a public body corporate and politic to be known as the "Liberty
20 County Public Facilities Authority," which shall be deemed to be a political subdivision of
21 the state and a public corporation, and by that name, style, and title said body may contract
22 and be contracted with, sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded, and complain and defend
23 in all courts of law and equity. The Authority shall have perpetual existence.

(b) The Authority shall consist of five members who shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Liberty County. With respect to the initial appointment by the Board of Commissioners of Liberty County, two members shall be appointed for a term of three years; two members shall be appointed for a term of two years; and one member shall be appointed for a term of one year. Thereafter, all appointments shall be made for terms of three years and until successors are appointed and qualified. Immediately after such appointments, the members of the Authority shall enter upon their duties. To be eligible for appointment as a member of the Authority, a person shall be at least 21 years of age and a resident of Liberty County, Georgia, for at least two years prior to the date of his or her appointment and shall not have been convicted of a felony. Any member of the Authority may be selected and appointed to succeed himself or herself.

(c) The Board of Commissioners of Liberty County may provide by resolution for compensation for the services of the members of the Authority in such amounts as it may deem appropriate; provided, however, that such members shall be reimbursed for their actual expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties.

(d) The members of the Authority shall elect one of their number as chairperson and another as vice chairperson. The members of the Authority shall also elect a secretary, who need not be a member of the Authority, and may also elect a treasurer, who need not be a member of the Authority. The secretary may also serve as treasurer. If the secretary or treasurer are not members of the Authority, such officers shall have no voting rights. Each of such officers shall serve for a period of one year and until their successors are duly elected and qualified.

(e) Three members of the Authority shall constitute a quorum. No vacancy on the Authority shall impair the right of the quorum to exercise all of the rights and perform all of the duties of the Authority.

SECTION 3.

Definitions.

As used in this Act, the term:

(1) "Authority" means the Liberty County Public Facilities Authority created by this Act.

(2) "Costs of the project" means and embraces the cost of construction; the cost of all lands, properties, rights, easements, and franchises acquired; the cost of all machinery and equipment; financing charges; interest prior to and during construction and for six months after completion of construction; the cost of engineering, architectural, fiscal agents' expenses, legal expenses, plans and specifications, and other expenses necessary or incidental to determining the feasibility or practicability of the project; administrative

1 expenses and such other expenses as may be necessary or incidental to the financing
2 authorized in this Act; working capital; and all other costs necessary to acquire, construct,
3 add to, extend, improve, equip, operate, and maintain the project.

4 (3) "Project" means:

5 (A) All buildings, facilities, and equipment necessary or convenient for the efficient
6 operation of:

7 (i) Liberty County, Georgia, or any department, agency, division, or commission
8 thereof;

9 (ii) The Liberty County School District; or

10 (iii) Any other political subdivision of the State of Georgia located within Liberty
11 County, Georgia; and

12 (B) Any "undertaking" permitted by the Revenue Bond Law.

13 (4) "Revenue Bond Law" means the Revenue Bond Law of the State of Georgia, codified
14 at O.C.G.A. Section 36-82-62 et seq., as amended, or any other similar law hereinafter
15 enacted.

16 (5) "Revenue bonds" means revenue bonds authorized to be issued pursuant to this Act.

17 (6) "Self-liquidating" means any project from which the revenues and earnings to be
18 derived by the Authority therefrom, including but not limited to any contractual payments
19 with governmental or private entities, and all properties used, leased, and sold in
20 connection therewith, together with any grants, will be sufficient to pay the costs of
21 operating, maintaining, and repairing the project and to pay the principal and interest on
22 the revenue bonds or other obligations which may be issued for the purpose of paying the
23 costs of the project.

24 (7) "State" means the State of Georgia.

25 **SECTION 4.**

26 **Powers.**

27 The Authority shall have the power:

28 (1) To have a seal and alter the same at its pleasure;

29 (2) To acquire by purchase, lease, gift, condemnation, or otherwise and to hold, operate,
30 maintain, lease, and dispose of real and personal property of every kind and character for
31 its corporate purposes;

32 (3) To acquire in its own name by purchase on such terms and conditions and in such
33 manner as it may deem proper or by condemnation in accordance with the provisions of
34 any and all existing laws applicable to the condemnation of property for public use, real
35 property, or rights or easements therein, or franchises necessary or convenient for its

1 corporate purposes; to use the same so long as its corporate existence shall continue; to
2 lease or make contracts with respect to the use of or disposal of the same in any manner
3 it deems to the best advantage of the Authority. The Authority shall be under no
4 obligation to accept and pay for any property condemned under this Act except from the
5 funds provided under the authority of this Act. In any proceedings to condemn, such
6 orders may be made by the court having jurisdiction of the suit, action, or proceedings
7 as may be just to the Authority and to the owners of the property to be condemned. No
8 property shall be acquired under the provisions of this Act upon which any lien or
9 encumbrance exists, unless, at the time such property is so acquired, a sufficient sum of
10 money is to be deposited in trust to pay and redeem the fair value of such lien or
11 encumbrance;

12 (4) To appoint, select, and employ officers, agents, and employees, including
13 engineering, architectural, and construction experts, fiscal agents, and attorneys, and fix
14 their respective compensations;

15 (5) To execute contracts, leases, installment sale agreements, and other agreements and
16 instruments necessary or convenient in connection with the acquisition, construction,
17 addition, extension, improvement, equipping, operation, or maintenance of a project; and
18 any and all persons, firms, corporations, Liberty County, the Liberty County School
19 District, and any other political subdivision or municipality of the State of Georgia
20 located in Liberty County, are hereby authorized to enter into contracts, leases,
21 installment sale agreements, and other agreements or instruments with the Authority upon
22 such terms and for such purposes as they deem advisable and as they are authorized by
23 law;

24 (6) To acquire, construct, add to, extend, improve, equip, hold, operate, maintain, lease,
25 and dispose of projects;

26 (7) To pay the costs of the project with the proceeds of revenue bonds or other
27 obligations issued by the Authority or from any grant or contribution from the United
28 States or any agency or instrumentality thereof or from this state or any agency or
29 instrumentality or other political subdivision thereof or from any other source
30 whatsoever;

31 (8) To accept loans or grants of money or materials or property of any kind from the
32 United States or any agency or instrumentality thereof, upon such terms and conditions
33 as the United States or such agency or instrumentality may require;

34 (9) To accept loans or grants of money or materials or property of any kind from this
35 state or any agency or instrumentality or political subdivision thereof, upon such terms
36 and conditions as this state or such agency or instrumentality or political subdivision may
37 require;

(10) To borrow money for any of its corporate purposes, to issue revenue bonds, and to provide for the payment of the same and for the rights of the holders thereof;

(11) To exercise any power usually possessed by private corporations performing similar functions, including the power to incur short-term debt and to approve, execute, and deliver appropriate evidence of any such indebtedness; and

(12) To do all things necessary or convenient to carry out the powers expressly given in this Act.

SECTION 5.

Revenue bonds.

The Authority, or any authority or body which has or which may in the future succeed to the powers, duties, and liabilities vested in the Authority created by this Act, shall have power and is authorized to provide by resolution for the issuance of revenue bonds of the Authority for the purpose of paying all or any part of the costs of the project and for the purpose of refunding revenue bonds or other obligations previously issued; provided, however, that no such revenue bonds shall be issued to finance a project for the Liberty County School District or any other political subdivision of the state located within Liberty County without the consent of the governing body of Liberty County. The principal of and interest on such revenue bonds shall be payable solely from the special fund hereby provided for such payment. The revenue bonds of each issue shall be dated, shall bear interest at such rate or rates per annum payable at such time or times, shall mature at such time or times not exceeding 40 years from their date or dates, shall be payable in such medium of payment as to both principal and interest as may be determined by the Authority, and may be redeemable before maturity, at the option of the Authority, at such price or prices and under such terms and conditions as may be fixed by the Authority in the resolution for the issuance of such revenue bonds.

SECTION 6.

Same; form; denomination; registration; place of payment.

The Authority shall determine the form of the revenue bonds and shall fix the denomination or denominations of the revenue bonds. The revenue bonds may be issued in coupon or registered form, or both, as the Authority may determine, and provision may be made for registration and exchangeability privileges. The Authority shall fix the place or places of payment of principal and interest thereon.

SECTION 7.

Same; signatures; seal.

All such revenue bonds shall bear the manual or facsimile signature of the chairperson or vice chairperson of the Authority and the attesting manual or facsimile signature of the secretary, assistant secretary, or secretary-treasurer of the Authority, and the official seal of the Authority shall be impressed or imprinted thereon. Any coupons attached thereto shall bear the manual or facsimile signatures of the chairperson or vice chairperson and the secretary, assistant secretary, or secretary-treasurer of the Authority. Any revenue bonds or coupons attached thereto may bear the manual or facsimile signatures of such persons as at the actual time of the execution of such revenue bonds or coupons shall be duly authorized or hold the proper office, although at the date of issuance of such revenue bonds such person may not have been so authorized or shall not have held such office. In case any officer whose signature shall appear on any revenue bond or any coupon shall cease to be such officer before the delivery of such revenue bond, such signature shall nevertheless be valid and sufficient for all purposes in the same manner as if that person had remained in office until such delivery.

SECTION 8.

Same; negotiability; exemption from taxation.

All revenue bonds shall have and are hereby declared to have all the qualities and incidents of negotiable instruments under the laws of this state. All revenue bonds and their transfer and the income therefrom shall be exempt from all taxation within this state.

SECTION 9.

Same; sale; price; proceeds.

The Authority may sell revenue bonds in such manner and for such price as it may determine to be in the best interest of the Authority. The proceeds derived from the sale of revenue bonds shall be used solely for the purpose and purposes provided in the resolutions and proceedings authorizing the issuance of such revenue bonds.

SECTION 10.

Same; interim receipts and certificates or temporary bonds.

Prior to the preparation of any definitive revenue bonds, the Authority may, under like restrictions, issue interim receipts, interim certificates, or temporary revenue bonds, with or without coupons, exchangeable for definitive revenue bonds upon the issuance of the latter.

SECTION 11.

Same; replacement of lost or mutilated bonds.

The Authority may provide for the replacement of any revenue bonds or coupons which shall become mutilated or be destroyed or lost.

SECTION 12.

Same; conditions precedent to issuance.

The Authority shall adopt a resolution authorizing the issuance of the revenue bonds. In the resolution, the Authority shall determine that the project financed with the proceeds of the revenue bonds is self-liquidating. Revenue bonds may be issued without any other proceedings or the happening of any other conditions or things other than those proceedings, conditions, and things which are specified or required by this Act. Any resolution providing for the issuance of revenue bonds under the provisions of this Act shall become effective immediately upon its passage and need not be published or posted, and any such resolution may be passed at any regular or special or adjourned meeting of the Authority by a majority of its members.

SECTION 13.

Credit not pledged.

Revenue bonds of the Authority shall not be deemed to constitute a debt of Liberty County, Georgia, nor a pledge of the faith and credit of said county, but such revenue bonds shall be payable solely from the fund hereinafter provided for. The issuance of such revenue bonds shall not directly, indirectly, or contingently obligate said county to levy or to pledge any form of taxation whatsoever for payment of such revenue bonds or to make any appropriation for their payment, and all such revenue bonds shall contain recitals on their face covering substantially the foregoing provisions of this section. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, this Act shall not affect the ability of the Authority and any political subdivision

1 or municipality to enter into an intergovernmental contract pursuant to which the political
2 subdivision or municipality agrees to pay amounts sufficient to pay operating charges and
3 other costs of the Authority or any project including, without limitation, the principal of and
4 interest on revenue bonds in consideration for services or facilities of the Authority.

5 **SECTION 14.**

6 Trust indenture as security.

7 In the discretion of the Authority, any issuance of revenue bonds may be secured by a trust
8 indenture by and between the Authority and a corporate trustee, which may be any trust
9 company or bank having the powers of a trust company within or without this state. Either
10 the resolution providing for the issuance of the revenue bonds or such trust indenture may
11 contain such provisions for protecting and enforcing the rights and remedies of the
12 bondholders as may be reasonable and proper and not in violation of law, including
13 covenants setting forth the duties of the Authority in relation to the acquisition and
14 construction of the project, the maintenance, operation, repair, and insuring of the project,
15 and the custody, safeguarding, and application of all moneys.

16 **SECTION 15.**

17 To whom proceeds of bonds shall be paid.

18 In the resolution providing for the issuance of revenue bonds or in the trust indenture, the
19 Authority shall provide for the payment of the proceeds of the sale of the revenue bonds to
20 any officer or person who, or any agency, bank, or trust company which shall act as trustee
21 of such funds and shall hold and apply the same to the purposes thereof, subject to such
22 regulations as this Act and such resolution or trust indenture may provide.

23 **SECTION 16.**

24 Sinking fund.

25 The moneys received pursuant to an intergovernmental contract and the revenues, fees, tolls,
26 fines, charges, and earnings derived from any particular project or projects, regardless of
27 whether or not such revenues, fees, tolls, fines, charges, and earnings were produced by a
28 particular project for which revenue bonds have been issued, unless otherwise pledged and
29 allocated, may be pledged and allocated by the Authority to the payment of the principal and
30 interest on revenue bonds of the Authority as the resolution authorizing the issuance of the
31 revenue bonds or the trust indenture may provide. Such funds so pledged from whatever

source received shall be set aside at regular intervals as may be provided in the resolution or trust indenture into a sinking fund, which sinking fund shall be pledged to and charged with the payment of:

- (1) The interest upon such revenue bonds as the same shall fall due;
- (2) The principal or purchase price of such revenue bonds as the same shall fall due;
- (3) Any premium upon such revenue bonds as the same shall fall due;
- (4) The purchase of such revenue bonds in the open market; and
- (5) The necessary charges of the paying agent for paying principal and interest.

The use and disposition of such sinking fund shall be subject to such regulations as may be provided in the resolution authorizing the issuance of the revenue bonds or in the trust indenture, but, except as may otherwise be provided in such resolution or trust indenture, such sinking fund shall be maintained as a trust account for the benefit of all revenue bonds without distinction or priority of one over another.

SECTION 17.

Remedies of bondholders.

Any holder of revenue bonds or any of the coupons appertaining thereto and the trustee under the trust indenture, if any, except to the extent the rights given in this Act, may be restricted by resolution passed before the issuance of the revenue bonds or by the trust indenture, may, either at law or in equity, by suit, action, mandamus, or other proceedings, protect and enforce any and all rights under the laws of this state, including specifically but without limitation, the Revenue Bond Law, or granted under this Act or under such resolution or trust indenture, and may enforce and compel performance of all duties required by this Act or by such resolution or trust indenture to be performed by the Authority or any officer thereof, including the fixing, charging, and collecting of revenues, fees, tolls, fines, and other charges for the use of the facilities and services furnished.

SECTION 18.

Validation.

Revenue bonds and the security therefor shall be confirmed and validated in accordance with the procedure of the Revenue Bond Law. The petition for validation shall also make party defendant to such action the state and any institution, department, or other agency thereof, and any county, municipality, school district, or other political subdivision or authority of this state which has contracted with the Authority for services or facilities relating to the project for which revenue bonds are to be issued and sought to be validated. Such defendant

1 shall be required to show cause, if any exists, why such contract or contracts shall not be
2 adjudicated as a part of the basis for the security for the payment of any such revenue bonds.
3 The revenue bonds, when validated, and the judgment of validation shall be final and
4 conclusive with respect to such revenue bonds and the security for the payment thereof and
5 interest thereon and against the Authority and all other defendants.

6 **SECTION 19.**

7 Venue and jurisdiction.

8 Any action to protect or enforce any rights under the provisions of this Act or any suit or
9 action against such Authority shall be brought in the Superior Court of Liberty County,
10 Georgia, and any action pertaining to validation of any revenue bonds issued under the
11 provisions of this Act shall likewise be brought in said court which shall have exclusive,
12 original jurisdiction of such actions.

13 **SECTION 20.**

14 Interest of bondholders protected.

15 While any of the revenue bonds issued by the Authority remain outstanding, the powers,
16 duties, or existence of said Authority or its officers, employees, or agents shall not be
17 diminished or impaired in any manner that will affect adversely the interests and rights of the
18 holders of such revenue bonds, and no other entity, department, agency, or authority shall be
19 created which will compete with the Authority to such an extent as to affect adversely the
20 interest and rights of the holders of such revenue bonds nor shall the state itself so compete
21 with the Authority. The provisions of this Act shall be for the benefit of the Authority and
22 the holders of any such revenue bonds, and upon the issuance of such revenue bonds under
23 the provisions of this Act, shall constitute a contract with the holders of such revenue bonds.

24 **SECTION 21.**

25 Moneys received considered trust funds.

26 All moneys received pursuant to the authority of this Act, whether as proceeds from the sale
27 of revenue bonds, as grants or other contributions, or as revenue, income, fees, and earnings,
28 shall be deemed to be trust funds to be held and applied solely as provided in this Act.

SECTION 22.

Purpose of the Authority.

Without limiting the generality of any provision of this Act, the general purpose of the Authority is declared to be that of providing buildings, facilities, and services for the residents of Liberty County, Georgia.

SECTION 23.

Rates, charges and revenues; use.

The Authority is hereby authorized to prescribe and fix rates and to revise same from time to time and to collect revenues, tolls, fees, and charges for the services, facilities, and commodities furnished, and in anticipation of the collection of the revenues, to issue revenue bonds or other types of obligations as provided in this Act to finance, in whole or in part, the costs of the project, and to pledge to the punctual payment of said revenue bonds or other obligations all or any part of the revenues.

SECTION 24.

Rules, regulations, service policies, and procedures
for operation of projects.

It shall be the duty of the Authority to prescribe rules, regulations, service policies, and procedures for the operation of any project or projects constructed or acquired under the provisions of this Act. The Authority may adopt bylaws.

SECTION 25.

Tort immunity.

To the extent permitted by law, the Authority shall have the same immunity and exemption from liability for torts and negligence as Liberty County, Georgia; and the officers, agents, and employees of the Authority when in the performance of the work of the Authority shall have the same immunity and exemption from liability for torts and negligence as the officers, agents, and employees of Liberty County, Georgia, when in the performance of their public duties or work of the county.

SECTION 26.

Tax-exempt status of Authority.

The properties of the Authority, both real and personal, are declared to be public properties used for the benefit and welfare of the people of this state and not for purposes of private or corporate benefit and income, and such properties and the Authority shall be exempt from all taxes and special assessments of any municipality or county or this state and any political subdivision thereof.

SECTION 27.

Effect on other governments.

This Act shall not and does not in any way take from Liberty County, Georgia, or any county or municipality the authority to own, operate, and maintain public facilities or to issue revenue bonds as provided by the Revenue Bond Law.

SECTION 28.

Liberal construction of Act.

This Act, being for the welfare of various political subdivisions of this state and its inhabitants, shall be liberally construed to effect the purposes hereof.

SECTION 29.

General repealer.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.