

House Bill 247

By: Representatives Smith of the 113th, Shaw of the 176th, Roberts of the 154th, Stephens of the 164th, England of the 108th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to local government,
2 so as to change certain provisions relating to acquisition and construction of water and
3 sewage systems; to prohibit counties, municipalities, and local authorities from requiring
4 connection with or use of water supplied by a public water system except when other water
5 is unfit; to prohibit charges or fees for services made available but not used; to provide for
6 applicability; to provide for exceptions; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to local government, is amended
10 by revising Code Section 36-34-5, relating to acquisition and construction of water and
11 sewage systems, as follows:

12 "36-34-5.

13 (a) In addition to the other powers which it may have, any municipal corporation shall
14 have the power under this chapter:

15 (1) To acquire by gift, by purchase, or by the exercise of the right of eminent domain,
16 to construct, to reconstruct, to improve, to better, and to extend any water system or
17 sewage system, or both, within the municipal corporation;

18 (2) To acquire by gift, by purchase, or by the exercise of the right of eminent domain any
19 lands, easements, rights in lands, and water rights in connection therewith;

20 (3) To operate and maintain any such systems for its own use and for:

21 (A) Public ~~public~~ and private persons within the territorial boundaries of the municipal
22 corporation who use the system; or

23 (B) Persons to whom the system is made available at the property owned by such
24 persons; and

25 (4) To prescribe, revise, and collect rates, fees, tolls, or charges for the services,
26 facilities, or commodities;

1 (A) Furnished ~~furnished~~ to persons or users; or

2 (B) Made ~~made~~ available by such systems to the property owner at such owner's
3 property. When services are available but not used, the maximum rates, fees, tolls, or
4 other charges imposed shall not exceed the minimum charge or fee imposed on a user
5 of such system.

6 (b) The provisions of subparagraphs (a)(3)(B) and (a)(4)(B) of this Code section shall
7 apply with respect to an individual residential property owner only in the case of a
8 municipality or public water system or project thereof that is exempted from the provisions
9 of subsections (a) and (b) of Code Section 36-60-17.1 pursuant to subsection (c) of such
10 Code section."

11 SECTION 2.

12 Said title is further amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

13 "36-60-17.1.

14 (a) No county, municipality, or local authority shall require a single-family residential
15 property owner or farm served by a private well to connect with or use water supplied by
16 a public water system, except where necessary to preclude the use of water obtained from
17 such private well that is demonstrably unfit for human consumption or other intended use;
18 nor shall it require such single-family residential property owner or farm whose water lines
19 are not connected with such public water system to pay any charge or fee for water supply
20 services made available but not used.

21 (b) Nothing in subsection (a) of this Code section shall preclude the repair or maintenance
22 of a well serving a single-family residence so as to meet the requirements for allowing
23 continued use of the same by a single-family residential property owner or farm without
24 connecting to a public water system or payment of charges or fees in accordance with
25 subsection (a) of this Code section. Such repairs shall be the sole responsibility of such
26 owner.

27 (c) Subsections (a) and (b) of this Code section shall not apply to:

28 (1) Any public water system having active service connection accounts which total more
29 than 125,000 and average more than 200 per square mile of total area served;

30 (2) A public water system with respect to a single-family residential property owner or
31 farm who has been mailed written notice to his or her address of record on the property
32 tax rolls by the appropriate county, municipality, or local authority by certified mail of
33 his or her right to opt out of connecting with such system and paying charges or fees for
34 system services made available but not used, if such property owner did not notify the
35 county, municipality, or local authority in writing on a form provided thereby of his or

1 her decision to exercise that option within 45 days after mailing of such notice by the
2 county, municipality, or local authority;

3 (3) Any project of a public water system for which revenue bonds have been validated,
4 issued, and sold prior to January 1, 2008; or

5 (4) Any public water system funded primarily through a federal or state grant that
6 contains stipulations in such grant requiring the county, municipality, or local authority
7 to levy a charge or fee for water supply services made available but not used. For all
8 state grants, loans, or contracts for services issued on and after July 1, 2007, no state
9 grant, loan, or contract for services funding any project of a public water system shall
10 contain any stipulations requiring a county, municipality, or local authority to levy a
11 charge or fee for water supply services made available but not used or requiring a county,
12 municipality, or local authority to require single-family property owners or farms to
13 connect with or use water supplied by a public water system, except where necessary to
14 preclude the use of water obtained from another source that is demonstrably unfit for
15 human consumption or other intended use. For the purposes of this paragraph, a federal
16 grant is defined as money provided directly to a county or municipality. Federal money
17 provided to a revolving loan fund or to the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority
18 or such other mechanism shall not be considered a federal grant."

19 **SECTION 3.**

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