

Senate Bill 339

By: Senators Miller of the 49th, Williams of the 19th, Mullis of the 53rd, Hill of the 32nd,  
Millar of the 40th and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 5 of Title 6 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the  
2 Georgia Aviation Authority, so as to provide for the transfer of certain personnel, aircraft,  
3 and other assets from the Georgia Aviation Authority to the Department of Natural  
4 Resources and the State Forestry Commission; to provide for related matters; to amend Title  
5 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to conservation and natural resources,  
6 so as to transfer certain personnel, assets, and liabilities of the Georgia Aviation Authority  
7 to the Department of Natural Resources and the State Forestry Commission; to provide the  
8 Department of Natural Resources and the State Forestry Commission with certain authority  
9 and duties with regard to aviation; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws;  
10 and for other purposes.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

12 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

13 Chapter 5 of Title 6 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Georgia  
14 Aviation Authority, is amended by revising Code Section 6-5-4, relating to the purpose of  
15 the authority, powers, support, and annual audits, as follows:

16 "6-5-4.

17 (a)(1)(A) The general purpose of the authority shall be to acquire, operate, maintain,  
18 house, and dispose of all state aviation assets, ~~except those aviation assets of the~~  
19 ~~Department of Public Safety~~, to provide aviation services and oversight of state aircraft  
20 and aviation operations to ensure the safety of state air travelers and aviation property,  
21 to achieve policy objectives through aviation missions, and to provide for the efficient  
22 operation of state aircraft.

23 (B) This Code section shall not diminish those powers and duties of the Department  
24 of Natural Resources under Code Section 12-2-11, the State Forestry Commission  
25 under Code Section 12-6-25, or the Department of Public Safety under Code Section  
26 35-2-140.

27 (2)(A) All aircraft previously transferred to the authority by the Department of Public  
 28 Safety and associated parts and equipment and a percentage of the budgeted operating  
 29 funds associated with such aircraft shall be transferred on September 1, 2011, back to  
 30 the custody and control of the Department of Public Safety; provided, however, that this  
 31 chapter shall have no application to aircraft owned or operated by the Department of  
 32 Defense.

33 (B) All aircraft under the custody and control of the authority as of June 30, 2012,  
 34 which were previously transferred to the authority by the Department of Natural  
 35 Resources and associated parts and equipment and any budgeted operating funds  
 36 associated with such aircraft shall be transferred on July 1, 2012, back to the custody  
 37 and control of the Department of Natural Resources.

38 (C) All aircraft under the custody and control of the authority as of June 30, 2012,  
 39 which were previously transferred to the authority by the State Forestry Commission  
 40 and associated parts and equipment and any budgeted operating funds associated with  
 41 such aircraft shall be transferred on July 1, 2012, back to the custody and control of the  
 42 State Forestry Commission.

43 (3) On and after July 1, 2009, or a later date determined by the Governor, no ~~other~~ entity  
 44 of state government, ~~other than the Department of Public Safety~~, shall acquire, lease, or  
 45 charter any aircraft other than through the authority.

46 (4)(A) Any person who is employed by an entity of state government as a pilot and  
 47 who is required by the terms of his or her employment to comply with the  
 48 requirements of Chapter 8 of Title 35, the 'Georgia Peace Officer Standards and  
 49 Training Act,' may remain in the employment of the employing agency but shall be  
 50 transferred for administrative purposes only to the authority on July 1, 2009, in  
 51 compliance with subsection (c) of Code Section 6-5-3; ~~provided, however, that those~~

52 (B) The provisions of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph notwithstanding:

53 (i) Those persons who are employed by the Department of Public Safety who are  
 54 assigned for administrative purposes only to the authority shall be transferred back to  
 55 the Department of Public Safety on September 1, 2011, and shall no longer be under  
 56 the administration or direction of the authority.

57 (ii) Any persons who as of June 30, 2012, were employed by the authority pursuant  
 58 to previous transfer from the Department of Natural Resources to the authority shall  
 59 be transferred back to the Department of Natural Resources on July 1, 2012, and shall  
 60 no longer be under the administration or direction of the authority.

61 (iii) Any persons who as of June 30, 2012, were employed by the authority pursuant  
 62 to previous transfer from the State Forestry Commission to the authority shall be

63 transferred back to the State Forestry Commission on July 1, 2012, and shall no  
 64 longer be under the administration or direction of the authority.

65 (5)(A)(i) All state aircraft required for the proper conduct of the business of the  
 66 several administrative departments, boards, bureaus, commissions, authorities,  
 67 offices, or other agencies of Georgia and authorized agents of the General Assembly,  
 68 or either branch thereof, and department owned airfields and their appurtenances shall  
 69 be managed and maintained by the authority; ~~provided, however, that all~~

70 (ii) The provisions of division (i) of this subparagraph notwithstanding:

71 (I) All airfields and appurtenances, including hangars, previously transferred by the  
 72 Department of Public Safety to the authority shall be transferred back to the  
 73 Department of Public Safety on September 1, 2011.

74 (II) All airfields and appurtenances, including hangars, previously transferred by  
 75 the Department of Natural Resources to the authority shall be transferred back to the  
 76 Department of Natural Resources on July 1, 2012.

77 (III) All airfields and appurtenances, including hangars, previously transferred by  
 78 the State Forestry Commission to the authority shall be transferred back to the State  
 79 Forestry Commission on July 1, 2012.

80 (B) The cost for the use of such state aircraft shall be charged by the authority to the  
 81 using state entity. The amount of such charge shall be determined by the authority.

82 (6)(A) The authority shall be authorized to dispose of any state aircraft and apply the  
 83 proceeds derived therefrom to the purchase of replacement aviation assets.

84 (B) This paragraph shall not apply to state aircraft assigned to the Department of Public  
 85 Safety, the Department of Natural Resources, or the State Forestry Commission.

86 (b) In the furtherance of its purpose, the authority shall have the power to:

87 (1) ~~Organize, staff,~~ Hire, organize, and train personnel to operate, maintain, house,  
 88 purchase, and dispose of aviation assets;

89 (2) Purchase, maintain, develop, and modify facilities to support aviation assets and  
 90 operations;

91 (3) Develop operating, maintenance, safety, security, training, education, and scheduling  
 92 standards for state aviation operations and conduct inspections, audits, and other similar  
 93 oversight to determine practices and compliance with such standards;

94 (4) Develop an accountability system for state aviation operations and activities;

95 (5) Identify the costs associated with the training, education, and purchase, operation,  
 96 maintenance, and administration of state aircraft and aviation operations and related  
 97 facilities; ~~training, and education~~, develop an appropriate billing structure; ~~;~~ and charge  
 98 agencies and other state entities for the costs of state aircraft and aviation operations;  
 99 provided, however, that any billing to an agency by the authority shall be suspended

100 whenever the Governor declares a state of emergency on any cost associated with aircraft  
 101 used during and in response to the state of emergency;

102 (6) Retain appropriate external consulting and auditing expertise;

103 (7) Engage aviation industry representatives to ensure best practices for state aviation  
 104 assets;

105 (8) Delegate certain powers pursuant to this chapter to other state entities; and

106 (9) Otherwise implement appropriate and efficient management practices for state  
 107 aviation operations.

108 (c)(1) The authority shall provide priority support for those state agencies and  
 109 departments, including local and state public safety and law enforcement entities, whose  
 110 operations require aviation operations when requested.

111 ~~(2)(A) No state entity other than the authority and the Department of Public Safety~~  
 112 ~~shall be authorized without the approval of the authority to expend state funds to~~  
 113 ~~purchase, lease, rent, charter, maintain, or repair state aircraft to be used in connection~~  
 114 ~~with state business or to employ a person whose official duties consist of piloting state~~  
 115 ~~aircraft without the approval of the authority.~~

116 ~~(B) This paragraph shall not apply to the Department of Public Safety, the Department~~  
 117 ~~of Natural Resources, or the State Forestry Commission.~~

118 (d) The funds and assets of the authority, as well as the performance of the authority, its  
 119 services, and equipment, shall be audited annually by the state auditor. ~~The initial audit~~  
 120 ~~shall be concluded no later than December 30, 2010.~~ The results of such audit shall be  
 121 open to inspection at reasonable times by any person. A copy of the audit report shall be  
 122 sent to the state accounting officer. The authority shall also provide the Governor, the  
 123 Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, the chairperson of the House Committee  
 124 on Public Safety and Homeland Security, the chairperson of the Senate Public Safety  
 125 Committee, the chairperson of the Senate Veterans, Military and Homeland Security  
 126 Committee, the chairperson of the House Committee on Transportation, and the  
 127 chairperson of the Senate Transportation Committee with a copy of the state audit report  
 128 which shall include a full report of the activities and services of the authority. The  
 129 performance audit report shall be provided no later than December 31, 2013.

130 (e) On September 1, 2011, the six aviation mechanic positions that were previously  
 131 transferred by the Department of Public Safety to the authority shall be returned to the  
 132 Department of Public Safety along with the funds budgeted for such positions."

133 **SECTION 2.**

134 Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to conservation and natural  
 135 resources, is amended in Article 1 of Chapter 2, relating to general provisions relative to the  
 136 Department of Natural Resources, by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

137 "12-2-11.

138 (a)(1) The department shall be authorized to acquire, operate, maintain, house, and  
 139 dispose of all state aviation assets assigned to the department, to provide aviation services  
 140 and oversight of such state aircraft and aviation operations for the mission of the  
 141 department and legitimate state business purposes, to achieve policy objectives through  
 142 aviation missions, and to provide for the efficient operation of such state aircraft.

143 (2) All aircraft under the custody and control of the Georgia Aviation Authority as of  
 144 June 30, 2012, which were previously transferred to the authority by the department and  
 145 associated parts and equipment and any budgeted operating funds associated with such  
 146 aircraft shall be transferred on July 1, 2012, back to the custody and control of the  
 147 department.

148 (3) Any persons who as of June 30, 2012, were employed by the Georgia Aviation  
 149 Authority pursuant to previous transfer from the department to the authority shall be  
 150 transferred back to the department on July 1, 2012, and shall no longer be under the  
 151 administration or direction of the authority.

152 (4) All airfields and appurtenances, including hangars, previously transferred to the  
 153 Georgia Aviation Authority by the department and all accounts receivable, budgeted  
 154 operating funds, other funds, contracts, liabilities, and obligations associated with the  
 155 aircraft being transferred back to the department as of July 1, 2012, shall become the  
 156 property, accounts receivable, budgeted operating funds, other funds, contracts, liabilities,  
 157 and obligations of the department on such date.

158 (5) The department shall be responsible for providing aviation services in support of the  
 159 mission of the department. The department shall be authorized to dispose of any state  
 160 aircraft assigned to the department and apply the proceeds derived therefrom to the  
 161 purchase of replacement aviation assets.

162 (b) The department shall have the power to:

163 (1) Hire, organize, and train personnel to operate, maintain, house, purchase, and dispose  
 164 of aviation assets;

165 (2) Purchase, lease, maintain, develop, and modify facilities to support aviation assets  
 166 and operations;

167 (3) Develop operating, maintenance, safety, security, training, education, and scheduling  
 168 standards for department aviation operations and conduct inspections, audits, and other  
 169 similar oversight to determine practices and compliance with such standards;

- 170 (4) Develop an accountability system for department aviation operations and activities;  
 171 (5) Identify the costs associated with training, education, and the purchase, operation,  
 172 maintenance, and administration of state aircraft assigned to the department and aviation  
 173 operations and related facilities;  
 174 (6) In conjunction with the Georgia Aviation Authority, develop an appropriate joint  
 175 billing structure for passenger transportation where the aircraft is designated and operated  
 176 as a 'civil aircraft' under Part 91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations and charge agencies  
 177 and other state entities for the full variable hourly costs for the operation of each type of  
 178 aircraft, evaluated annually and adjusted as necessary based upon the price of fuel,  
 179 maintenance, and other fees that are a direct result of flying the aircraft on that specific  
 180 trip; provided, however, that any billing to an agency by the department shall be  
 181 suspended whenever the Governor declares a state of emergency on any cost associated  
 182 with aircraft used during and in response to such state of emergency;  
 183 (7) Retain appropriate external consulting and auditing expertise;  
 184 (8) Engage aviation industry representatives to ensure best practices for department  
 185 aviation assets;  
 186 (9) Delegate certain powers pursuant to this article to other state entities;  
 187 (10) Otherwise implement appropriate and efficient management practices for  
 188 department aviation operations; and  
 189 (11) Enter into agreements with the Georgia Aviation Authority for mutual use of state  
 190 airfields and appurtenances, including aircraft hangars."

191 **SECTION 3.**

192 Said title is further amended in Part 1 of Article 1 of Chapter 6, relating to the State Forestry  
 193 Commission, by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

194 "12-6-25.

195 (a)(1) The commission shall be authorized to acquire, operate, maintain, house, and  
 196 dispose of all state aviation assets assigned to the commission, to provide aviation  
 197 services and oversight of such state aircraft and aviation operations for the mission of the  
 198 commission and legitimate state business purposes, to achieve policy objectives through  
 199 aviation missions, and to provide for the efficient operation of such state aircraft.

200 (2) All aircraft under the custody and control of the Georgia Aviation Authority as of  
 201 June 30, 2012, which were previously transferred to the authority by the commission and  
 202 associated parts and equipment and any budgeted operating funds associated with such  
 203 aircraft shall be transferred on July 1, 2012, back to the custody and control of the  
 204 commission.

205 (3) Any persons who as of June 30, 2012, were employed by the Georgia Aviation  
 206 Authority pursuant to previous transfer from the commission to the authority shall be  
 207 transferred back to the commission on July 1, 2012, and shall no longer be under the  
 208 administration or direction of the authority.

209 (4) All airfields and appurtenances, including hangars, previously transferred to the  
 210 Georgia Aviation Authority by the commission and all accounts receivable, budgeted  
 211 operating funds, other funds, contracts, liabilities, and obligations associated with the  
 212 aircraft being transferred back to the commission as of July 1, 2012, shall become the  
 213 property, accounts receivable, budgeted operating funds, other funds, contracts, liabilities,  
 214 and obligations of the commission on such date.

215 (5) The commission shall be responsible for providing aviation services in support of the  
 216 mission of the commission. The commission shall be authorized to dispose of any state  
 217 aircraft assigned to the commission and apply the proceeds derived therefrom to the  
 218 purchase of replacement aviation assets.

219 (b) The commission shall have the power to:

220 (1) Hire, organize, and train personnel to operate, maintain, house, purchase, and dispose  
 221 of aviation assets;

222 (2) Purchase, lease, maintain, develop, and modify facilities to support aviation assets  
 223 and operations;

224 (3) Develop operating, maintenance, safety, security, training, education, and scheduling  
 225 standards for commission aviation operations and conduct inspections, audits, and other  
 226 similar oversight to determine practices and compliance with such standards;

227 (4) Develop an accountability system for commission aviation operations and activities;

228 (5) Identify the costs associated with training, education, and the purchase, operation,  
 229 maintenance, and administration of state aircraft assigned to the commission and aviation  
 230 operations and related facilities;

231 (6) In conjunction with the Georgia Aviation Authority, develop an appropriate joint  
 232 billing structure for passenger transportation where the aircraft is designated and operated  
 233 as a 'civil aircraft' under Part 91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations and charge agencies  
 234 and other state entities for the full variable hourly costs for the operation of each type of  
 235 aircraft, evaluated annually and adjusted as necessary based upon the price of fuel,  
 236 maintenance, and other fees that are a direct result of flying the aircraft on that specific  
 237 trip; provided, however, that any billing to an agency by the commission shall be  
 238 suspended whenever the Governor declares a state of emergency on any cost associated  
 239 with aircraft used during and in response to such state of emergency;

240 (7) Retain appropriate external consulting and auditing expertise;

- 241 (8) Engage aviation industry representatives to ensure best practices for commission  
242 aviation assets;
- 243 (9) Delegate certain powers pursuant to this article to other state entities;
- 244 (10) Otherwise implement appropriate and efficient management practices for  
245 commission aviation operations; and
- 246 (11) Enter into agreements with the Georgia Aviation Authority for mutual use of state  
247 airfields and appurtenances, including aircraft hangars."

248 **SECTION 4.**

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