

House Bill 526

By: Representatives Willard of the 51st, Riley of the 50th, Wilkinson of the 52nd, Geisinger of the 48th, Martin of the 49th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To create the North Fulton Regional Radio System Authority; to provide a short title; to
2 provide a declaration of need; to provide for membership of the authority; to provide for a
3 quorum and voting; to define certain terms; to provide for the powers of the authority; to
4 provide that indebtedness of the authority shall not constitute debt to the establishing local
5 governments; to provide for venue of actions relating to any provisions of this Act; to
6 provide for the purpose of the authority; to provide that the authority may establish rates and
7 collect revenues for services; to provide for rules, regulations, and policies; to provide for tort
8 immunity; to provide for exemptions from certain taxes; to provide for an effective date; to
9 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 Short title.

13 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "North Fulton Regional Radio System
14 Authority Act."

15 **SECTION 2.**

16 Declaration of need.

17 It is declared that there exists a need for a North Fulton Regional Radio System Authority
18 to function without profit in developing and promoting for the public good certain
19 communication facilities and services in order to provide an interoperable, high quality, and
20 reliable and uninterrupted communication signal for public safety and public services and for
21 the other purposes expressed in this Act.

SECTION 3.

North Fulton Regional Radio System Authority.

24 (a) There is hereby created a public body corporate and politic to be known as the "North
25 Fulton Regional Radio System Authority," which shall be deemed to be a political
26 subdivision of the state and a public corporation, and by that name, style, and title said body
27 may contract and be contracted with, sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded, and
28 complain and defend in all courts of law and equity. The authority shall have perpetual
29 existence.

30 (b) The authority shall consist of four members, to include the following: (1) the city
31 manager of the City of Sandy Springs, Georgia, or his or her designee; (2) the city manager
32 of the City of Milton, Georgia, or his or her designee; (3) the city manager of the City of
33 Alpharetta, Georgia, or his or her designee; (4) and the city manager of the City of Roswell,
34 Georgia, or his or her designee. Additional members who are city managers of other
35 municipalities, or their designees, may be added to the authority by agreement of the existing
36 members, subject to such additional municipalities paying a share of capital investment as
37 approved by the existing members. To be eligible to serve as a member of the authority, a
38 person shall meet the applicable requirements of Code Section 45-2-1 of the O.C.G.A.

39 (c) The authority may provide by resolution for compensation for the services of the
40 members of the authority in such amounts as it may deem appropriate; provided, however,
41 that such members shall be reimbursed for their actual expenses necessarily incurred in the
42 performance of their duties.

43 (d) The members of the authority shall elect one of their number as chairperson and another
44 as vice chairperson. The chairperson shall preside over the regular and special meetings of
45 the authority. In the event that the chairperson is not in attendance, the vice chairperson shall
46 preside. The members of the authority shall also elect a secretary, and may also elect a
47 treasurer, who need not be members of the authority. The secretary and treasurer shall not
48 be the chairperson or vice chairperson. The secretary may also serve as treasurer. If either
49 the secretary or the treasurer is not a member of the authority, such officer shall have no
50 voting rights. Each of such officers shall serve for a period of one year and until their
51 successors are duly elected and qualified.

52 (e) A majority of the members of the authority shall constitute a quorum. No vacancy on
53 the authority shall impair the right of the quorum to exercise all of the rights and perform all
54 of the duties of the authority. Any action which requires approval of the authority shall be
55 by majority vote of those members present, provided that a quorum is present. In the event
56 of a tie vote, the vote of each member who cast a vote on the question shall be weighted
57 according to the share of total capital investment made in the authority by the municipality

58 such member represents as compared to the total capital investment made by all
 59 municipalities represented by members of the authority, and the votes as so weighted shall
 60 be recalculated accordingly to determine the approval or failure of the motion.

61 **SECTION 4.**

62 Definitions.

63 As used in this Act, the term:

64 (1) "Authority" means the North Fulton Regional Radio System Authority created by this
 65 Act.

66 (2) "Capital investment" means the amount of funds contributed to the purchasing and
 67 installation of start-up equipment for the authority.

68 (3) "Costs of the project" means and embraces the cost of construction; the cost of all
 69 lands, properties, rights, easements, and franchises acquired; the cost of all machinery and
 70 equipment; financing charges; interest prior to and during construction and for six months
 71 after completion of construction; the cost of engineering, architectural, fiscal agents' and
 72 legal expenses, plans and specifications, licensing fees and costs, and other expenses
 73 necessary or incidental to determining the feasibility or practicability of the project;
 74 administrative expenses and such other expenses as may be necessary or incident to the
 75 financing herein authorized; working capital; and all other costs necessary to acquire,
 76 construct, add to, extend, improve, equip, operate, and maintain the project.

77 (4) "County" means any county created under the Constitution or laws of this state.

78 (5) "Establishing local governments" shall mean the mayors and councils of the Cities
 79 of Alpharetta, Milton, Roswell, and Sandy Springs, Georgia.

80 (6) "Local government" or "local governing authority" means any municipal corporation
 81 or county or any state or local authority, board, or political subdivision created by the
 82 General Assembly or pursuant to the Constitution and laws of this state.

83 (7) "Obligation" means any indebtedness, including, without limitation, any note, lease,
 84 contract, or other evidence of indebtedness.

85 (8) "Project" means the acquisition, construction, installation, modification, renovation,
 86 repair, extension, renewal, replacement, or rehabilitation of land, interest in land,
 87 buildings, structures, facilities, or other improvements and the acquisition, installation,
 88 modification, renovation, repair, extension, renewal, replacement, rehabilitation, or
 89 furnishing of fixtures, machinery, equipment, furniture, or other property of any nature
 90 whatsoever used on, in, or in connection with any such land, interest in land, building,
 91 structure, facility, or other improvement, all for the essential public purpose of providing
 92 facilities and services permitted by the obligation to meet needs and standards for radio

93 communication for public safety and public services for municipalities which are
94 represented by members of the authority and to aid in the accomplishment of the purposes
95 of the authority.

96 (9) "State" means the State of Georgia.

97 SECTION 5.

98 Powers.

99 The authority shall have the power:

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

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

104 (3) To acquire in its own name by purchase, on such terms and conditions and in such
105 manner as it may deem proper, real property or rights or easements therein or franchises
106 necessary or convenient for its corporate purposes, to use the same so long as its
107 corporate existence shall continue, to lease or make contracts with respect to the use of
108 the same, or to dispose of the same in any manner it deems to the best advantage of the
109 authority;

110 (4) To appoint, select, and employ officers, agents, and employees, including
111 engineering, architectural, and construction experts, fiscal agents, and attorneys, and fix
112 their compensations;

113 (5) To execute contracts, leases, installment sale agreements, and other agreements and
114 instruments necessary or convenient in connection with the acquisition, construction,
115 addition, extension, improvement, equipping, operation, or maintenance of a project; and
116 any and all persons, firms and corporations, local governments, and any other political
117 subdivision of the state located within the operational area of the authority are hereby
118 authorized to enter into contracts, leases, installment sale agreements, and other
119 agreements or instruments with the authority upon such terms and for such purposes as
120 they deem advisable and as they are authorized by law;

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

123 (7) To pay the costs of the project with the proceeds of any grant or contribution from
124 the United States of America or any agency or instrumentality thereof or from the state
125 or any agency or instrumentality or other political subdivision thereof or from any other
126 source whatsoever;

- 127 (8) To finance projects and facilities of the authority for the furtherance of the purposes
128 of the authority within the geographic area over which the authority has operational
129 capability by loan, loan guarantee, grant, lease, or otherwise and to pay the cost of such
130 from any funds of the authority or from any contributions or loans by persons,
131 corporations, partnerships, whether limited or general, or other entities, all of which the
132 authority is authorized to receive, accept, and use;
- 133 (9) To sell or pledge any obligation acquired by it whenever it is determined by the
134 authority that the sale thereof is desirable;
- 135 (10) To accept loans and grants of money or materials or property of any kind from the
136 United States of America or any agency or instrumentality thereof, upon such terms and
137 conditions as the United States of America or such agency or instrumentality may
138 require;
- 139 (11) To accept loans and grants of money or materials or property of any kind from the
140 state or any agency or instrumentality or political subdivision thereof, upon such terms
141 and conditions as the state or such agency or instrumentality or political subdivision may
142 require;
- 143 (12) To borrow money for any of its corporate purposes and to provide for the payment
144 of the same and for the rights of the holders thereof;
- 145 (13) To exercise any power granted by the laws of this state to public or private
146 corporations which is not in conflict with the public purpose of the authority, including
147 the power to incur short-term debt and to approve, execute, and deliver appropriate
148 evidence of any such indebtedness; and
- 149 (14) To do all things necessary or convenient to carry out the powers expressly given in
150 this Act.

151 **SECTION 6.**

152 Credit not pledged.

153 Obligations of the authority shall not be deemed to constitute a debt of the establishing local
154 governments nor a pledge of the faith and credit of said establishing local governments. The
155 issuance of such obligations shall not directly, indirectly, or contingently obligate said
156 establishing local governments to levy or to pledge any form of taxation whatsoever for
157 payment of such obligations or to make any appropriation for their payment, and all such
158 obligations shall contain recitals on their face covering substantially the foregoing provisions
159 of this section. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, this Act shall not affect the ability
160 of the authority and any political subdivision or municipality to enter into an
161 intergovernmental contract pursuant to which the political subdivision or municipality agrees

162 to pay amounts sufficient to pay operating charges and other costs of the authority or any
163 project including, without limitation, the principal of and interest on obligations in
164 consideration for services or facilities of the authority.

165 **SECTION 7.**

166 Venue.

167 Any action to protect or enforce any rights under the provisions of this Act or any suit or
168 action against the authority shall be brought in the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia.

169 **SECTION 8.**

170 Moneys received considered trust funds.

171 All moneys received pursuant to the authority of this Act, whether as grants or other
172 contributions, or as revenue, income, fees, and earnings, shall be deemed to be trust funds
173 to be held and applied solely as provided in this Act.

174 **SECTION 9.**

175 Purpose of the authority.

176 Without limiting the generality of any provision of this Act, the general purpose of the
177 authority is declared to be that of providing for the development of a regional communication
178 system for public safety and public service use to guarantee interoperability, high quality,
179 and reliable and uninterrupted communication signals through facilities, equipment, and
180 services for the establishing local governments by contract, including other persons, entities,
181 and local governments who may hereinafter contract and agree for services from the
182 authority. The general purposes of the authority shall not restrict the authority from
183 developing and servicing any persons, entities, or local governments who may contract for
184 the authority to develop communication services or facilities, or both, in other areas where
185 operational capacity is deemed necessary or desirable.

186 **SECTION 10.**

187 Rates, charges, and revenues; use.

188 The authority is hereby authorized to prescribe and fix rates and to revise the same from time
189 to time and to collect revenues, tolls, fees, and charges for the services, facilities, and

190 commodities furnished, and in anticipation of the collection of the revenues, to incur
191 indebtedness as herein provided to finance, in whole or in part, the costs of the project.

192 **SECTION 11.**

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

194 It shall be the duty of the authority to prescribe or cause to be prescribed rules, regulations,
195 service policies, and procedures for the operation of any project constructed or acquired
196 under the provisions of this Act. The authority may adopt bylaws.

197 **SECTION 12.**

198 Tort immunity.

199 To the extent otherwise permitted by law, the authority shall have the same immunity and
200 exemption from liability for torts and negligence as a political subdivision of the state; and
201 the officers, agents, and employees of the authority when in the performance of the work of
202 the authority shall have the same immunity and exemption from liability for torts and
203 negligence as the officers, agents, and employees of a political subdivision of the state when
204 in the performance of their public duties or work for a political subdivision of this state.

205 **SECTION 13.**

206 Tax-exempt status of authority.

207 The properties of the authority, both real and personal, are declared to be public properties
208 used for the benefit and welfare of the people of the state and not for purposes of private or
209 corporate benefit and income, and such properties and the authority shall be exempt from
210 taxes and special assessments of the state or any political subdivision thereof to the extent
211 allowed by general law.

212 **SECTION 14.**

213 Effect on other governments.

214 This Act shall not and does not in any way take from the establishing local governments or
215 any political subdivision of the state the authority to own, operate, and maintain public
216 facilities or to issue obligations.

217

SECTION 15.

218

Liberal construction of Act.

219 This Act, being for the welfare of various political subdivisions of the state and their

220 inhabitants, shall be liberally construed to effect the purposes hereof.

221

SECTION 16.

222

Effective date.

223 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2013.

224

SECTION 17.

225

Repealer.

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