



STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

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Aviation Authority Legislation Receives Final Passage

ATLANTA— The Georgia General Assembly today gave final passage to Governor Sonny Perdue’s proposal to create the Georgia Aviation Authority that will govern the state’s aircraft management. Senate Bill 85 was introduced by Administration Floor Leader Sen. Bill Heath and carried in the House by Administration Floor Leader Rep. Jimmy Pruett.

“The Georgia Aviation Authority will increase safety, decrease costs and deploy state assets more efficiently,” said Governor Perdue. “This legislation continues our commitment of creating a responsible state government that acts as a good steward for the taxpayers’ dollars.”

The legislation is a result of recommendations from the Commission for a New Georgia task force on aviation management. The task force found that five different state agencies own a combined total of 84 aircraft, which are based in 18 locations around the state. More than half of the aircraft are over 20 years old and represent 20 different types with vintages dating to the Vietnam era.

The aviation authority will deploy these assets more efficiently by using the aircraft to meet the missions of multiple agencies rather than one agency. This will enable the state to cover existing missions with fewer aircraft. The authority will also standardize the type of aircraft the state owns, allowing the state to standardize maintenance and training which will reduce costs and increase safety.

The authority will also allow the state to modernize its fleet and eliminate the higher costs of maintaining old aircraft. By establishing a unified team of aviation professionals, the authority will ensure safe, effective and efficient operations.

“This legislation will enhance safety, make state government more efficient and save the citizens of Georgia money,” said Sen. Bill Heath.

The authority will be composed of nine members: the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House (or their designee); the Department of Transportation Commissioner; the Department of Public Safety Commissioner; the Department of Natural Resources Commissioner; and the Director of the State Forestry Commission; and the two remaining members will represent the aviation business community and will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House.

“An efficient, cross-trained team of aviation professionals at the state government level is very important to our overall law enforcement efforts statewide,” said Jefferson County Sheriff Gary Hutchins, President of the Georgia Sheriffs’ Association.

“Establishing the Aviation Authority is a responsible step to achieve that, and for that reason the Georgia Sheriffs’ Association is pleased that SB 85 passed the General Assembly.”

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