

**The Capitol Report**

March 21, 2008

Vol. 4, No. 9

**Regional Transportation Funding Bill Scheduled for Floor Vote Thursday**

The House Rules Committee added three amendments to SR 845 Thursday morning and then included the bill on the debate calendar for next Thursday, March 27th. That will be the 35<sup>th</sup> Day of the 40 Day session.

Senate Resolution 845 provides for a constitutional amendment this November which would allow regions to create a regional transportation plan through their RDC. The regions would then take the plans to their voters in a separate regional referendum for approval along with up to a 1% sales tax to pay for it. A project list would be required to be published before the vote and the tax would have a sunset to ensure that voter's have accountability.

Amendments were added to include an opt-out mechanism for counties prior to a regional vote and to exempt off-road fuel from the tax. A third amendment requested by the Democratic caucus as well as some conservative Republicans dedicates the fourth per cent that is currently taxed on motor fuel to transportation purposes including transit. Currently the fourth per cent on gasoline is not dedicated to DOT but instead goes to the general fund and may be used in any part of the state budget.

The opt-out mechanism would allow a county to opt out of a regional vote by a majority vote of the county commission. The vote must occur within 45 days of the region setting its transportation list to be valid. If a county commission votes to opt out, they would then have 15 additional days to reconsider that vote. If a county commission does not vote, they are deemed to have agreed to the transportation list and to participate in the regional vote.

SR 845 needs to receive 120 votes on the House floor to move to the Senate. It is expected that the Senate will move to disagree to the House version in order to send the legislation to a conference committee where final details will be worked out. The resolution will then be reported out of conference to the Senate and House where it will again need a two-thirds majority to become law.

\*\*The Capitol Report is provided by your local chamber in partnership with the Regional Business Coalition. The Regional Business Coalition (RBC) is comprised of 16 local chambers of commerce and business organizations in the metro Atlanta region representing over 16,000 businesses. To learn more, please visit [www.rbcatl.com](http://www.rbcatl.com).