

Senate Bill 169

By: Senators Gooch of the 51st, Williams of the 19th, Beach of the 21st, Mullis of the 53rd,
Miller of the 49th and others

AS PASSED

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 32 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to highways, bridges,
2 and ferries, so as to revise what constitutes part of the state highway system; to provide for
3 the appropriation of funds to the Department of Transportation; to provide for notice in the
4 disposition of property; to provide for the determination of market value of property acquired
5 by the department; to provide for the procedure for the sale of property when the right of
6 acquisition is not exercised; to provide for the implementation of the federal Public
7 Transportation Safety Program; to provide for the reconstruction and relocation of outdoor
8 advertising signs located upon property that has been acquired for public road purposes; to
9 provide for standards for relocating such signs; to provide for standards of compensation by
10 the Department of Transportation and local governments in instances when an outdoor
11 advertising sign is located upon land acquired for public purposes; to amend Title 40 of the
12 Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to motor vehicles and traffic, so as to provide
13 for the operation of personal transportation vehicles in certain areas and under certain
14 conditions; to provide for submission of electronic accident reports by law enforcement
15 agencies; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

16 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

17 **SECTION 1.**

18 Title 32 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to highways, bridges, and ferries,
19 is amended by revising Code Section 32-4-20, relating to the composition of the state
20 highway system, as follows:

21 "32-4-20.

22 The state highway system shall consist of an integrated network of arterials and of other
23 public roads or bypasses serving as the major collectors therefor. No public road shall be
24 designated as a part of the state highway system unless it meets at least one of the
25 following requirements:

- 26 (1) Serves trips of substantial length and duration indicative of regional, state-wide, or
 27 interstate importance;
- 28 (2) Connects adjoining county seats;
- 29 (3) Connects urban or regional areas with outlying areas, both intrastate and interstate;
 30 or
- 31 (4) Serves as part of the principal collector network for the state-wide and interstate
 32 arterial public road system; ~~or~~
- 33 ~~(5) Serves as part of a programmed road improvement project plan in which the~~
 34 ~~department will utilize state or federal funds for the acquisition of rights of way."~~

35 SECTION 2.

36 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 32-5-2, relating to the appropriation
 37 of funds to the Department of Transportation, as follows:

38 "32-5-2.

39 All federal funds received by the state treasurer under Code Section 32-5-1 are continually
 40 appropriated to the department for the purpose specified in the grants of such funds except
 41 as such funds may be directed by the federal government to the State Road and Tollway
 42 Authority, ~~provided that no federal funds or funds appropriated to the department shall be~~
 43 ~~expended for procurement of rights of way for a road to be constructed on a county road~~
 44 ~~system except as otherwise provided by law or by agreement between the federal~~
 45 ~~government and the department."~~

46 SECTION 3.

47 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 32-7-4, relating to procedure for the
 48 disposition of property by the Department of Transportation, as follows:

49 "32-7-4.

50 (a)(1) In disposing of property, as authorized under Code Section 32-7-3, the department,
 51 a county, or a municipality, provided that such department, county, or municipality has
 52 held title to the property for no more than 30 years, shall notify the owner of such
 53 property at the time of its acquisition or, if the tract from which the department, a county,
 54 or a municipality acquired its property has been subsequently sold, shall notify the owner
 55 of abutting land holding title through the owner from whom the department, a county, or
 56 a municipality acquired its property. The notice shall be in writing delivered to the
 57 appropriate owner or by publication if his or her address is unknown; and he or she shall
 58 have the right to acquire, as provided in this subsection, the property with respect to
 59 which the notice is given. Publication, if necessary, shall be in a newspaper of general
 60 circulation in the county where the property is located. ~~If, after a search of the land and~~

61 ~~probate~~ available public records, the address of any interested party cannot be found, ~~an~~
 62 ~~affidavit stating such a record of the~~ facts and reciting the steps taken to establish the
 63 address of any such person shall be placed in the department, county, or municipal
 64 records and shall be accepted in lieu of service of notice by mailing the same to the last
 65 known address of such person. After properly completing and ~~filing such affidavit~~
 66 documenting the search, the department, county, or municipality may dispose of the
 67 property in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) of this Code section.

68 (2)(A) When an entire parcel acquired by the department, a county, or a municipality,
 69 or any interest therein, is being disposed of, it may be acquired under the right created
 70 in paragraph (1) of this subsection at such price as may be agreed upon, but in no event
 71 less than the price paid for its acquisition. When only remnants or portions of the
 72 original acquisition are being disposed of, they may be acquired for the market value
 73 thereof at the time the department, county, or municipality decides the property is no
 74 longer needed. The department shall use a real estate appraiser with knowledge of the
 75 local real estate market who is licensed in Georgia ~~and not an employee of the~~
 76 ~~department~~ to establish the fair market value of the property prior to listing such
 77 property.

78 (B) The provisions of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph notwithstanding, if the value
 79 of the property is ~~\$30,000.00~~ \$75,000.00 or less as determined by department estimate,
 80 the department, county, or municipality may negotiate the sale.

81 (3) If the right of acquisition is not exercised within ~~60~~ 30 days after due notice, the
 82 department, county, or municipality may proceed to sell such property as provided in
 83 subsection (b) of this Code section.

84 (4) When the department, county, or municipality in good faith and with reasonable
 85 diligence attempted to ascertain the identity of persons entitled to notice under this Code
 86 section and mailed such notice to the last known address of record of those persons or
 87 otherwise complied with the notification requirements of this Code section, the failure
 88 to in fact notify those persons entitled thereto shall not invalidate any subsequent
 89 disposition of property pursuant to this Code section.

90 (b)(1)(A) Unless a sale of the property is made pursuant to paragraph (2) or (3) of this
 91 subsection, such sale shall be made to the bidder submitting the highest of the sealed
 92 bids received after public advertisement for such bids for two weeks. If the highest of
 93 the sealed bids received is less than but within 15 percent of the established market
 94 value, the department may accept that bid and convey the property in accordance with
 95 the provisions of subsection (c) of this Code section. The department or the county or
 96 municipality shall have the right to reject any and all bids, in its discretion, to
 97 readvertise, or to abandon the sale.

98 (B) Such public advertisement shall be inserted once a week in such newspapers or
 99 other publication, or both, as will ensure adequate publicity, the first insertion to be at
 100 least two weeks prior to the opening of bids, the second to follow one week after the
 101 first publication. Such advertisement shall include but not be limited to the following
 102 items:

- 103 (i) A description sufficient to enable the public to identify the property;
- 104 (ii) The time and place for submission and opening of sealed bids;
- 105 (iii) The right of the department or the county or municipality to reject any one or all
 106 of the bids;
- 107 (iv) All the conditions of sale; and
- 108 (v) Such further information as the department or the county or municipality may
 109 deem advisable as in the public interest.

110 (2)(A) Such sale of property may be made by the department or a county or
 111 municipality by listing the property through a real estate broker licensed under Chapter
 112 40 of Title 43 who has a place of business located in the county where the property is
 113 located or outside the county if no such business is located in the county where the
 114 property is located. Property shall be listed for a period of at least three months. Such
 115 property shall not be sold at less than its fair market value. The department shall use
 116 a real estate appraiser with knowledge of the local real estate market who is licensed
 117 in Georgia ~~and not an employee of the department~~ to establish the fair market value of
 118 the property prior to listing such property. All sales shall be approved by the
 119 commissioner on behalf of the department or shall be approved by the governing
 120 authority of the county or municipality at a regular meeting ~~and that~~ shall be open to the
 121 public ~~at which meeting, and~~ public comments shall be allowed at such meeting
 122 regarding such sale.

123 (B) Commencing at the time of the listing of the property as provided in subparagraph
 124 (A) of this paragraph, the department, county, or municipality shall provide for a notice
 125 to be inserted once a week for two weeks in the legal organ of the county indicating the
 126 names of real estate brokers listing the property for the political subdivision. The
 127 department, county, or municipality may advertise in magazines relating to the sale of
 128 real estate or similar publications.

129 (C) The department, county, or municipality shall have the right to reject any and all
 130 offers, in its discretion, and to sell such property pursuant to the provisions of paragraph
 131 (1) of this subsection.

132 (3)(A) Such sale of property may be made by the department, a county, or a
 133 municipality to the highest bidder at a public auction conducted by an auctioneer

134 licensed under Chapter 6 of Title 43. Such property shall not be sold at less than its fair
135 market value.

136 (B) The department, county, or municipality shall provide for a notice to be inserted
137 once a week for the two weeks immediately preceding the auction in the legal organ of
138 the county including, at a minimum, the following items:

- 139 (i) A description sufficient to enable the public to identify the property;
- 140 (ii) The time and place of the public auction;
- 141 (iii) The right of the department or the county or municipality to reject any one or all
142 of the bids;
- 143 (iv) All the conditions of sale; and
- 144 (v) Such further information as the department or the county or municipality may
145 deem advisable as in the public interest.

146 The department, county, or municipality may advertise in magazines relating to the sale
147 of real estate or similar publications.

148 (C) The department, county, or municipality shall have the right to reject any and all
149 offers, in its discretion, and to sell such property pursuant to the provisions of paragraph
150 (1) or (2) of this subsection.

151 (c) Any conveyance of property shall require the approval of the department, county, or
152 municipality, by ~~order~~ approval of the commissioner on behalf of the department and, in
153 the case of a county or municipality, by resolution, to be recorded in the minutes of its
154 meeting. If the department or the county or municipality approves a sale of property, the
155 commissioner, chairperson, or presiding officer may execute a quitclaim deed conveying
156 such property to the purchaser. All proceeds arising from such sales shall be paid into and
157 constitute a part of the funds of the seller."

158 **SECTION 4.**

159 Said title is further amended in Code Section 32-9-10, relating to the implementation of the
160 federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, by revising subsection (a)
161 and adding new subsections to read as follows:

162 "(a) The purpose of this Code section is to implement ~~Section 3029 of Public Law~~
163 ~~102-240, the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the federal~~
164 Public Transportation Safety Program, 49 U.S.C. Section 5329, referred to in this Code
165 section as the act."

166 "(g) Nothing in this Code section is intended to conflict with any provision of federal law;
167 and, in case of such conflict, such portion of this Code section as may be in conflict with
168 such federal law is declared of no effect to the extent of the conflict.

169 (h) The department is authorized to take the necessary steps to secure the full benefit of
 170 the federal-aid program and meet any contingencies not provided for in this Code section,
 171 abiding at all times by a fundamental purpose to perform all acts which are necessary,
 172 proper, or incidental to the efficient and safe operation and development of the department
 173 and the state highway system and of other modes and systems of transportation."

174 **SECTION 5.**

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

176 "32-3-3.1.

177 (a) When rights of way or real property or interests therein are acquired by a state agency,
 178 county, or municipality for public road purposes and an outdoor advertising sign permitted
 179 by the state in accordance with Part 2 of Article 3 of Chapter 6 of this title and a local
 180 county or municipal ordinance, which has not lapsed and is in good standing, is located
 181 upon such property, the outdoor advertising sign may be relocated or reconstructed and
 182 relocated through agreement of the owner of the property and owner of the outdoor
 183 advertising sign, if such owners do not refer to the same person, so long as the new
 184 location:

185 (1) Is within 250 feet of its original location, provided that the new location meets the
 186 requirements for an outdoor advertising sign provided in Part 2 of Article 3 of Chapter 6
 187 of this title;

188 (2) Is available to the owner of the outdoor advertising sign and is comparable to the
 189 original location, as agreed upon by the owner of the outdoor advertising sign and the
 190 department;

191 (3) Does not result in a violation of federal or state law; and

192 (4) Is within zoned commercial or industrial areas or unzoned commercial or industrial
 193 areas as defined in Code Section 32-6-71.

194 (b) An outdoor advertising sign relocated as provided for in subsection (a) of this Code
 195 section may be adjusted in height or angle or both in order to restore the visibility of the
 196 sign to the same or a comparable visibility which existed prior to acquisition by a state
 197 agency, county, or municipality, provided that the height of such relocated sign shall not
 198 exceed the greater of the height of the existing sign or 75 feet, as measured from the base
 199 of the sign or the crown of the adjacent roadway to which the sign is permitted, whichever
 200 is greater.

201 (c) For any federal aid project or any project financed in whole or in part with federal
 202 funds, the actual costs of relocation or reconstruction and relocation of an outdoor
 203 advertising sign relocated as provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section shall be
 204 paid by the department. For any project not financed in whole or in part with federal funds,

205 the actual costs of relocation or reconstruction and relocation shall be paid by the owner
 206 of the outdoor advertising sign.

207 (d) If no relocation site that meets the requirements of paragraphs (1) through (4) of
 208 subsection (a) of this Code section exists, just and adequate compensation shall be paid by
 209 the department to the owner of the outdoor advertising sign.

210 (e) If a sign is eligible to be relocated as provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section
 211 but such new location would result in a conflict with local ordinances in the city or county
 212 of applicable jurisdiction and no variance or other exception is granted to allow relocation
 213 as requested by the owner of the outdoor advertising sign, just and adequate compensation
 214 shall be paid by the local governing authority to the owner of the outdoor advertising sign.
 215 However, no compensation resulting from the denial of a variance or exception by a local
 216 governing authority for an outdoor advertising sign eligible for relocation under this Code
 217 section shall be paid either directly or indirectly by the department."

218 **SECTION 6.**

219 Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to motor vehicles and traffic, is
 220 amended in Code Section 40-6-331, relating to designation of PTV paths, licensing
 221 requirements and operating standards of PTVs, local immunity, signage, and street crossing,
 222 by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

223 "(e)(1) Regardless of whether a local ordinance has been approved regarding the use of
 224 PTVs, delivery personnel for a commercial delivery company which has at least 10,000
 225 persons employed in this state may operate PTVs within a residential subdivision with
 226 speed limits of 25 miles per hour or less, provided that any PTV utilized by a commercial
 227 delivery company shall:

228 (A) Include the equipment required in subsection (a) of Code Section 40-6-330.1;

229 (B) Be marked in a conspicuous manner with the name of the commercial delivery
 230 company;

231 (C) Be operated by a person with a valid driver's license; and

232 (D) Be utilized only for the delivery of envelopes and packages with a maximum size
 233 of 130 inches for the combined length and girth and with a weight no greater than 150
 234 pounds per package.

235 (2) Any commercial delivery company utilizing PTVs under this subsection shall remit
 236 a \$50.00 fee every five years to each local authority where a PTV is operated along with
 237 a signed statement that such commercial delivery company operates PTVs within the
 238 jurisdiction of such local authority.

239 (3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, any person operating a
 240 PTV under this subsection shall be granted all the rights and shall be subject to all the

241 duties applicable to a driver of any other vehicle under this chapter; provided, however
 242 that subsection (b) of Code Section 40-6-315 shall not be applicable to the operator of a
 243 PTV under this subsection.

244 (4) Any PTV authorized to operate pursuant to this subsection shall not pull multiple
 245 trailers. Such PTVs shall be limited to pulling one trailer or cargo platform and be
 246 limited to hauling weight no greater than the carrying capacity of the PTV as determined
 247 by the manufacturer."

248 **SECTION 7.**

249 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 40-9-31, relating to the submission
 250 of accident reports to the Department of Driver Services and the Department of
 251 Transportation, as follows:

252 "40-9-31.

253 Each state and local law enforcement agency shall submit to the Department of
 254 Transportation the original document of any accident report prepared by such law
 255 enforcement agency or submitted to such agency by a member of the public. If the
 256 Department of Driver Services receives a claim requesting determination of security, the
 257 Department of Transportation shall provide a copy or an electronic copy of any relevant
 258 accident reports to the Department of Driver Services. Any law enforcement agency may
 259 transmit the information contained on the accident report form by electronic means,
 260 provided that the Department of Transportation has first given approval to the reporting
 261 agency for the electronic reporting method utilized. The law enforcement agency shall
 262 retain a copy of each accident report. Any law enforcement agency that transmits the data
 263 by electronic means must transmit the data using a nonproprietary interchangeable
 264 electronic format and reporting method. For purposes of this Code section, the term
 265 'nonproprietary' shall include commonly used report formats. All such reports shall be
 266 submitted to the Department of Transportation within 14 days when electronically
 267 submitted and when not electronically submitted not more than 15 days following the end
 268 of the month in which such report was prepared or received by such law enforcement
 269 agency. The Department of Transportation is authorized to engage the services of a third
 270 party in fulfilling its responsibilities under this Code section."

271 **SECTION 8.**

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