

CAPITOL UPDATE

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Session Begins!

Earlier this month the 2012 Legislative Session started quickly with both chambers taking action on a number of items left from last session. Thus far this year, there have been a number of technology related bills that may positively, and in a few cases negatively impact our industry. The first, and probably largest piece of legislation, is HB 718, otherwise known as Invest Georgia. Invest Georgia is a venture capital-centric bill with the intent to provide funding to start-up and growth stage companies. The bill calls for insurance premium tax credits to be auctioned off and the money raised through those credits can be split up among venture funds in the state. All money must be invested into Georgia companies and the venture firms must be located in the state.

This bill, which addresses the needs of many tech start-ups, has gained considerable attention and support from the business community and is something that TAG will continue to promote at the State Capitol.

Additionally, other pieces of legislation, such as SB 313, (Georgia Broadband Investment Equity Act), require that local governments who build and sell network services to their residents, must abide by the same rules and regulations that private providers do. This creates fairness in the system so that all communication providers are treated equally under the law and do not have a competitive advantage over another simply because of their make-up.

TAG's 2011 Technology Legislators of the Year, Representative Mike Dudgeon, has introduced HB 706, which repeals a ban on technology brought into the classroom, such as smart phones and laptops, for educational purposes.

To learn about other legislative issue and bills that TAG is tracking, you can visit our legislative tracker anytime.

[2012 Legislative Tracker](#)

Science and Technology Commission Report

At the end of 2011, the Science and Technology Commission finalized its report to the General Assembly. This report, includes a number of recommendations that should improve our tech sector. Below you will find excerpts from the report recommendations. Beginning Tuesday, a website will be launched that will show the full report.

- Implement a Georgia Capital Acceleration Fund program with a focus on developing a robust, statewide venture capital industry in order to help encourage the growth and continued viability of Georgia-based start-up companies through access to financing and local mentorship.
- Establish an Innovation Advisory Council made up of business, government, and community leaders to help guide strategic plan development and implementation
- Create an energy tax exemption for data centers.
- Modify investment terms and restore funding for the Georgia Seed Capital Fund
- Support College and Career Academies, and other high school programs that provide curriculums that meet industry workforce needs and provide dual enrollment (post-secondary education credits) to their high school students.
- Expand STEM business/education partnerships statewide.
- Identify one-time funding to purchase equipment to expand the number of telehealth sites

For more information on the Science and Technology Commission follow us on twitter [@GASciTechPlan](#) today.

Please contact Richie Johnson at 404-920-2028 or richie@tagonline.org for additional questions.