

**GEORGIA STATE SENATE  
BUDGET AND EVALUATION OFFICE**

**Chairman's Column**

June 5, 2009

**MAY REVENUES OFFER NO RELIEF**

Maybe it was a little anticlimactic since the Governor lowered the Revenue Estimate a week ago and assessed agencies 25% of the June allotments, but the May revenues are in and while certainly not positive, are actually about 6% under the worse case scenario envisioned a week ago.

Revenues for the month of May were down 14.4% overall or some \$211.7 million down from May of 2008. Individual income tax collections were down 21.2% continuing a consistent negative trend. May Sales taxes were down overall \$181 million or 20.2%. Of that, local sales tax collections were down \$173 million, so most of the loss occurred in local collections. Motor fuel taxes were down an additional \$23 million for both excise and sales taxes. Corporate income taxes were down about \$10 million.

So, Year-To-Date figures continue to disappoint and cause that sinking feeling. Overall, revenues are down over 10% or \$1.5 billion dollars for the first 11 months. Individual income taxes are down 11.0% or \$884 million. Sales taxes are down overall \$780 million or 8.0% of which the state portion is -\$404 million or -7.6%. Motor fuel taxes are down collectively \$126.8 million or -13.7%. Corporate income taxes are down \$211 million or -26.7%.

The state has now used up about \$300 million of the \$562 million in the Shortfall Reserve Fund with a month to go.

This week's column also continues a review of legislation passed by the 2009 General Assembly.

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**SB 110** - Allows county permitted agents to trap beavers on public right of ways.

**SB 111** - Allows belt or hat mounted lights to be used for hunting for which lights are legal.

**SR 12** - Continues by constitutional amendment existing rewards for successful oil and gas exploration off Georgia's coast and on land. Includes alternative fuel development to fossil fuels.

**SR 333** - Amended to include naming the GBI Regional Office Building in Statesboro for the late Agent in Charge Johnnie McGlamery.

**SR 589** - Resolution urging Congress to include private forest lands in the definition of resources being utilized for biomass energy production.

**HB 248** - Creates a voluntary cost-effective program for the clean-up of hazardous waste sites with a \$5000 application fee.

**HB 326** - Creates a two-year and multi-year hunting and/or fishing license and makes changes to fees generally increasing out of state fees.

**HB 552** - Extends the ban on injecting above ground water into the aquifer for storage.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

**SB 20** - Prohibits a local government from enacting policies that create a "sanctuary" for illegal aliens that results in illegal aliens not being reported to authorities. Violations would cause a loss of state assistance or grants.

**SB 196** - Increases the fines when a serious injury is the result of a right of way violation. Includes a 30 day license suspension for failing to yield right of way to a motorcyclist or farm vehicle. Bill also increases by \$7, the administrative fee the DUI schools can charge with the fee being passed through to the Department of Driver Services. Bill also clarifies language in the law related to penalties for driving without a license.

**HB 2** - Calls for the State to direct local governments to comply with federal immigration law concerning verifying legal status of incarcerated individuals. Also requires every public employer to register and participate in the federal authorization program to verify employment eligibility of new hires. A website posting will suffice. Also clarifies "public benefit" in requiring the verification of legal status in granting different state or local benefit programs.

**HB 100** - The "Super Speeder" bill increases license reinstatement fees and directs the Department of Driver Services to impose an extra fee of \$200 for convicted speeders going 85 mph or over on any highway or 75 or over on two lane highways. The legislation states that although the funds go into the state's general fund, the intent is for the funds to go towards supporting a trauma system.

**HB 343** - Creates a new position within the Department of Public Safety of "weight inspector." This job title would be performed at fixed weight facilities and would not be a certified peace officer but would be supervised by a certified peace officer.