



# GEORGIA CONSERVATION VOTERS

## GCV E-Newsletter

January 18, 2008

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### 2008 General Assembly Begins



The 2008 Georgia General Assembly began on Monday, January 14th.

We just came from the Capitol where there is a flurry of activity caused by the return of 236 legislators, staff, advocates, industry lobbyists, and the media. GCV will be at the Gold Dome every day of the session and -- with your help -- we can make 2008 a good year for the environment.

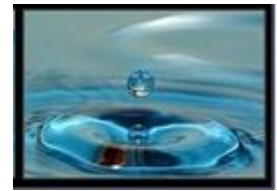
Members of Georgia's conservation community vote every year to focus our legislative efforts. Below are the five main legislative priorities for the 2008 legislative session. You'll be hearing from us throughout the session and your voice is needed in Atlanta to help us make these priorities a reality.

**About Us:**

Voter by voter, GCV is transforming the political landscape by electing leaders with conservation values and holding them accountable to implementing policies that ensure clean water and air, abundant wildlife, scenic landscapes, and economic opportunities for all Georgians.

[www.gavoters.com](http://www.gavoters.com)

**2008 Legislative Priorities**



**Ensure a Clean and Abundant Water Supply:** In 2005, the state embarked on a water management planning process. However, the draft plan presented to the Legislature ignores the watersheds it purports to protect by creating planning districts that fail to ensure protection and equitable allocation of our water resources. We will work with legislators to create statutory protections that create planning districts that adhere to river basin boundaries, restrict new interbasin transfers that harm downstream communities and require conservation measures to be exhausted before new reservoirs are built.



**Secure Funding for Transit:** Traffic congestion degrades our quality of life by pumping pollution into the air and harming our competitiveness. The quickest and most effective way to achieve permanent congestion relief is through expanding our transit options. More than \$93 million in federal funds for commuter rail in Georgia continues to sit on a shelf unused. We will advocate for significant funding for mass transit be it through local or state appropriations.



**Clean School Buses, Healthy Kids:** Diesel engines, such as those operating in school buses, are one of the most harmful sources of air pollution in Georgia. Diesel exhaust is associated with adverse health impacts including asthma, cancer and respiratory death. Diesel exhaust can build up in the cabins of school buses. Thankfully, there are pollution control devices that can reduce this pollution by 90 percent and federal funds currently available to Georgia for this purpose. We will work to ensure diesel clean-up, especially for school districts in regions of the state violating clean air standards.



**Conserve Our Natural Areas:** The General Assembly voted unanimously to create the Georgia Land Conservation Tax Credit in 2006. While it has been relatively successful to date, the bill will make several changes to make it even more appealing to landowners interested in conservation easements or land donation.

**No Rollbacks:** We will continue to defend against efforts to protect our natural resources and budget cutbacks for critical conservation programs.

You can read more about these priorities at our website – [www.gavoters.com](http://www.gavoters.com)

## Sustainable Business Day



On Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, we are sponsoring the Fifth Annual Sustainable Business Day at the Capitol with Sustainable Business Partners and the Georgia Recycling Coalition.

We'll have select green businesses on hand to help educate legislators on how economic growth and environmental protection can go hand in hand. They will include broad categories of companies that work in water conservation, green energy/energy efficiency, recycling/waste reduction, green construction and building and socially responsible investing.

If you know of a sustainable business interested in next year's Sustainable Business Day, please encourage them to contact us.

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## 2008 Environmental Legislative Reception



Mark your calendar! On Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> from 6:00pm to 8:30pm, we are hosting the 2008 Environmental Legislative Reception at the Interface Showroom in Midtown Atlanta.

It's a great opportunity to catch up with friends, colleagues and legislators. Learn about the latest environmental issues being debated at the General Assembly.

If you or your organization is interested in sponsoring the event, email Jessica Day at [jessica@gavoters.com](mailto:jessica@gavoters.com).

To purchase a sponsorship, or your ticket for \$20, click [here](#).

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Sincerely,  
Jill Johnson  
Interim Executive Director

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Georgia Conservation Voters  
175 Trinity Ave SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
phone:(404)522-8144, fax:(404)688-5912 [info@gavoters.com](mailto:info@gavoters.com)