

# HB 449

## Call Before You Dig Law Changes

Published Month XX, 2021

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### HB 449 Action Alert – March 18, 2021

#### **Please Contact Your Senator(s) Immediately and Ask Them to Vote NO on Senator Tippins' Substitute for HB 449**

March 23, 2021

You are being contacted as you have a Senator on the [Senate Regulated Industries Committee](#) and we believe your county will have significant cost concerns with the Senator Tippins substitute version of HB 449 – legislation significantly changing Georgia's Call Before You Dig Law.

Please contact your state Senator Immediately as the bill will be before the committee today!

#### **Why Counties Should be Concerned w HB 449**

As amended in Senate subcommittee on Tuesday, March 16, HB 449 requires all counties with traffic lights, signs, signals (traffic control devices) and traffic management systems to join and abide by rules of the Georgia Utility Protection Center (UPC). This will require county transportation or roads departments with traffic control devices to, **by July 1, 2021**:

- Pay annual dues to the UPC,
- Pay to hire additional staff to provide all these locates within 48 hours,
- Participate in the state/formal response on locating your underground traffic signal and management systems (within 48 hours) every time another utility performs excavation in your county's ROW (near this infrastructure),
- Locate your traffic infrastructure (within 48 hours) every time utility locates mistakenly get triggered when work is well away from your signal infrastructure,
- Likely have the county responsible for locating signal infrastructure on state highways, and
- Possibly be penalized and fined by the State Public Service Commission when not meeting the above requirements.

**Action Needed**

Immediately Contact and Urge members of the Senate Regulated Industries Committee to:

- 1) Support the bill as it was originally introduced, removing the amendment that was added which mandates that counties with traffic control devices pay for the above, or
- 2) Oppose the bill if that amendment is not removed.

**Talking Points:**

- The [original language in HB 449](#) was carefully developed over a three month process this summer among ACCG, GMA, DOT, utilities, contractors, excavators, and over 20 different groups/associations working in state and local government right-of-way.
- The General Assembly always asks for groups to come together on a compromise before presenting them legislation. The amendment upsets this consensus and compromise.
- Having one group upset this balance by introducing an amendment late in the process bodes ill for all future compromise efforts and risks sacrificing all the other benefits included in the bill.
- In good faith, ACCG, GMA and DOT have already supported and are committed to [HR 172](#), establishing a House study committee to carefully review how traffic control devices should be addressed by the UPC and the Call Before You Dig Law.