

# Timber Harvesting Ordinances

## Updating the Harvesting Notification and Bonding Requirements

### BACKGROUND

Having an equitable and uniform system for timber harvesting is vital for the fiber security of Georgia's \$36.3 billion forest products industry. The Georgia General Assembly began this process in 2015 with House Bill 199 (sponsored by Rep. John Corbett) and continues this effort in 2020 with House Bill 897 (sponsored by Rep. James Burchett), which seeks to further clarify legislative intent and increase the efficiency and competitiveness of these operations throughout Georgia.

### HOUSE BILL 897 PROVISIONS

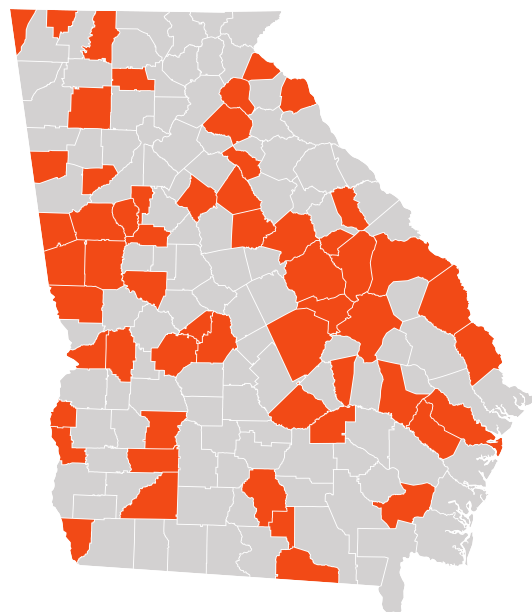
- » Establishes uniformity for harvest ordinances among Georgia's 159 counties
- » Further clarifies that state law requires a simple notification, not permits
- » Creates an easy-to-use, state-wide harvest notification website that would replace county-by-county notifications
- » Limits the scope of what harvest bonds can be used for
- » Provides for due process when a county takes action (pulls) on bond
- » Creates a ladder bond process for operators who are out of compliance
- » Increases fines for harvesting operators who fail to notify

### WHY IS LEGISLATION NEEDED

Approximately 56 Counties across Georgia have implemented local ordinances that are out of compliance with state law. Grey areas in current law have been exploited to result in more burdensome requirements on timber harvesters increasing the cost of doing business. This is critical because Georgia has the highest timber harvest volume in the United States.

Issues with non-compliance vary, however, examples include:

- Requiring a "permit" rather than a simple "notification"
- Requiring a bond higher than \$5,000, or requiring a bond for each harvest operation in the county.
- Requiring a "notification fee" or "permit fee"
- Requiring advanced notice before moving on to a given operation.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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