

2022 Legislative Priorities

About Science for Georgia

Science for Georgia is a 501c3 dedicated to bridging the gap between scientists and the public through training, outreach opportunities, and direct contact with the public, policymakers, and the press. Science for Georgia highlights how science can impact people's lives and advocates for the responsible use of science in public policy. We do this by facilitating the process of drafting or evaluating legislation, ensuring that at each step of the legislative process the most relevant and up-to-date science and data are considered.

2022 Focus

In 2021 we decided to go back to basics – water, food, and education and workforce. In these areas we worked with the community to identify “science levers,” pivot points that can make a difference in breaking out of vicious cycles surrounding subjects such as low-literacy and food insecurity and turning them into virtuous cycles where a rising tide lifts all boats.

Based on these pivot points, Science for Georgia will focus on working with partners to support the utilization of evidence-based best-practices around working with partners to support the following specific measures surrounding education and workforce, water, food, and environmental health during the 2022 GA General Assembly Session.

Science for Georgia has, and will continue to produce, plain-language summaries of the scientific research that supports these measures to ensure that scientific facts are part of the legislative conversation.

Legislative Focus

Education & Workforce – Support all Parts of The Pipeline

Establish a [birth to retirement literacy pipeline](#) with coordinated efforts and metrics.

1. Establish reading curriculums and teacher certifications that [reflect 50 years of literacy research](#). Ensure that all third graders can read proficiently (*read and comprehend*) by [learning both components of literacy](#): word sounds and word comprehension. Only proficient readers can become productive members of a 21st century workforce.
2. [Fully fund the proper ratio of school counselors and school nurses](#). To put kids on the path to success they need support both mentally and physically.
3. Support efforts to [fully-fund access to quality childcare for all](#). Quality childcare supports the current and future workforce: enabling parents to work to support their families and putting children on the path to learning success and enables.

Water – Protect the Waterways of Georgia

Protect the waterways of Georgia from harm, enabling them to provide fresh water for drinking, agriculture, fisheries, and enjoyment.

1. [Protect the Okefenokee Swamp](#) from external threats, including a proposed mine. Work with partners that are focused on passing legislation to permanently protect this natural resource that provides for Georgia's economy, people, and environment.
2. [Ensure coal ash is properly stored](#) by requiring remediation of past disposal sites, and proper best-practices in current disposal sites. [Best practices](#) are to store coal ash in lined pits and move old waste from unlined ponds into lined pits.

Food – Build a Roadmap to Eliminate Food Insecurity

[Build a Food Security Initiative](#) that mimics the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative. Work with our partners on developing a plan that highlights evidence-based solutions that maximize short-term aid and work toward creating a food system that eliminates the need for food assistance.

1. Measure where we are: empower a single state agency to create an aggregated food-data system that measures metrics across all aspects of the food system. This allows measurement of progress and identification of impactful programs.
2. Ensure efficient use of resources: develop local community task forces that coordinate activities, information, and access. Enable the government, localities, and community organizations to work together.
3. Pilot successful public-private partnerships: Farm to School Programs. These examples of public-private partnerships uplift local Georgia farmers, provide nutritional food to children in need, and educate about nutrition.

Environmental Health

The environment impacts what we eat, drink, and breathe, [shaping our health](#). Marginalized communities have [died at higher rate of Covid-19](#). This is due, in part, to living in neighborhoods with dirtier water, less greenspace, reduced access to healthy food, and higher air pollution.

Two bills work to address the [inequitable effects of the environment on health](#). HB 339, the Georgia Environmental Justice Act, would create a commission to conduct scientific analysis on neighborhoods that are particularly at high risk from environmental threats to human health and understand how to create improved outcomes. HB 432 would require additional permitting scrutiny for new facilities that would be located in a historically marginalized neighborhoods. It requires that the surrounding communities and neighborhoods are part of the permitting process. Understanding the full impact of facilities and ensuring that people have a say in what goes into their backyard restores agency and enables people to choose for themselves between the tradeoffs that always involved in new infrastructure.