



2023 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.

2023 Focus

Science is everywhere and we focus on the basis – water, food, and education and workforce. In these areas we work with the community to identify “science levers,” pivot points that can make a difference in breaking out of vicious cycles surrounding subjects such as clean water, food insecurity, and low-literacy, 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 to support the following specific measures surrounding education and workforce, water, food, and environmental health during the 2023 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

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.

Ensure that proposed legislation seeks to address the inequitable effects of the environment on health, or at the very least, is not detrimental to the long-term health and wellness of communities.

[Work toward establishing 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. 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.

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 additives applied to the land [add value to the soil](#) by increasing its nutrient value or preventing runoff (good soil amendments increase soil productivity, increasing agricultural productivity and saving money for farmers), instead of [turning Georgia's farmland into open waste fields](#).

Education & Workforce – Creation of a Literacy Ecosystem

Only 30% of Georgia 4th graders read *proficiently*. Science tells us that indicates a [large number of high school graduates are not workforce ready](#). Without literacy skills, high school graduates cannot step into high-skill jobs, hurting the Georgia economy and perpetuating a cycle of low-wage jobs and low-literacy.

In 2022, Science for Georgia worked to support the passage of [HR 650 Create a House Study Committee on Literacy Instruction](#). We have been supporting the committee effort by creating an introductory summary and synthesizing gathered information.

While the committee is not done yet, **the emerging solution focuses around creation of an infrastructure that enables whole-community supports and establishing pre-service and in-service teacher training that [reflects 50 years of literacy research](#).**

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. [Reduce food waste](#). Support efforts to reduce food waste both by individuals and the food industry. Ensure composting is available to divert waste from landfills and create nutrient-rich soil amendments.

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