

# 2025 Legislative Priorities



Many ongoing points of contention around the state result from a lack of transparency. When people are not engaged and informed before a decision is made, their only recourse is protests and lawsuits after the fact. **To encourage growth for all Georgians, our priorities rest on the fundamental tenet of transparent and inclusive decision making.**

## Looming Power Crunch

Georgians' energy bills have increased approximately \$45 a month in the past year. \$45! This has driven many individuals into energy burden. At the same time, data centers and crypto mines are pushing our energy infrastructure to its limit. **Near term predicted energy demands are equivalent to 1.8M homes, and 85% of all four Vogtle reactors.** These competing forces are putting an even bigger strain on energy infrastructure and Georgia Power is calling for increased capacity, which will drive up rates even further.

To begin to address this situation we support

1. The placement of a consumer ombudsmen on the Georgia Public Service Commission to ensure all voices and interests heard.
2. The transparent disclosure from all facilities that draw more than a certain amount of power and water to ensure that public resources and tax revenues are properly accounted for.

## Preventing and Addressing Environmental Burdens

The environment impacts what we eat, drink, and breathe, shaping our health. Living in neighborhoods with dirtier water, less greenspace, reduced access to nutritious food, and higher air pollution has a negative impact on a person's economic and physical wellbeing.

Georgia should encourage growth in a method that ensures everyone has a seat at the table, and all members of a community feel positive, not negative, impacts. That which can be measured can be obtained. Understanding the Cumulative Impact of Pollution on Economic Development and Growth is the first step on this journey.

## Science Note

In alignment with Title 28 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, all bills that significantly impact state expenditures and revenues must be accompanied by a Fiscal Note. We strongly recommend that the Georgia General Assembly adopt a similar policy for any bills that involve scientific principles and evidence-based interventions. These Science Notes would highlight the strengths and limitations of the up-to-date, nonpartisan research into the science of the proposed policy. Using these memos would help to guide policies and demonstrate to constituents the commitment of the legislature to science.

Communication with the communities impacted is one of the most important considerations in legislation, and we strive to ensure Georgians have input in the areas that most impact their lives. Science for Georgia has, and will continue to produce, plain-language summaries of the scientific research regarding specific legislation to ensure that scientific facts are part of the legislative conversation.

## About Science for Georgia

Science for Georgia is a 501c3 dedicated to bridging the gap between scientists and the public. We highlight the impact of science on people's lives and advocate for the responsible use of science in public policy.

**Contact:** please contact Amy Sharma, [amy.sharma@sci4ga.org](mailto:amy.sharma@sci4ga.org), with questions or comments.

## On our radar

### Breakup With Plastic

Georgia's environment is being negatively impacted by plastic waste. Plastic is very difficult to recycle and [only about 5% of plastic that is thrown into recycling bins is actually repurposed.](#)

In 2023 a [non-binding international agreement was reached in Paris to look at plastic on a global scale.](#) [The EPA has a draft National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution](#) that aims to reduce pollution during production, improve recycling management, and prevent plastic from entering the environment. We encourage the General Assembly to enable pathways for Georgia to meet the standards of the Paris Agreement.

### 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.

### Rural Medicine Access

Hospitals in rural Georgia have been [continuing to close](#) in the past decade and growing the urban-rural health divide. To bridge his healthcare gap and increase access to capable providers across the state, the General Assembly should allow [physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses](#) to practice to the full extent of their training and [expand access to broadband.](#)

### Medicaid Expansion

Medical insurance is essential to ensuring people can access the preventative care, screenings, and medical treatments that they need to live a happy and healthy life. Georgia is one of a handful of states that have [not approved the expansion of Medicaid.](#) [Prioritizing expanding Medicaid](#) would allow the state to utilize federal funding and prevent unnecessary gaps in coverage.

### Early Education and Childcare

[20% of Georgia children live in poverty.](#) Georgia has capacity for only 15% of those children in Head Start. Fully funding Head Start is a win-win - nurturing children's development and enabling parents to work a steady job. This helps [break the cycle of poverty.](#) In Georgia, low-income children that [enrolled in preschool had a higher academic achievement and proficiency](#) on 3rd grade test scores.

### Green Jobs

Georgia's workforce is growing. [A comprehensive plan](#) to transition the economy will ensure that all communities can participate in the new workforce, a coordinated strategy is implemented, and workers are treated and paid fairly. Proper workforce development ensures that workers who are in industries being phased out have sufficient resources to join the new green economy.