



## GEORGIA CONSERVATION VOTERS

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### **Georgia Conservation Voters Releases 2007-08 Legislative Scorecard**

*House scores rise while Senate scores drops slightly, freshmen scores higher than average*

ATLANTA - Today Georgia Conservation Voters released its *2007-08 Legislative Scorecard*. The scorecard grades each member of Georgia's General Assembly on key environmental votes from the previous two-year legislative session.

The latest scorecard shows the average score in the Senate dropped by two percent while the House average experienced a nine point increase. The Senate average was 64 percent in 2005-06, but it fell slightly to 62 percent in 2007-08. The House average rose from 54 percent in 2005-06 to 63 percent in 2007-08.

"We're pleased with all the legislators who improved their scores over last year, but the General Assembly overall is still bringing home a scorecard that shows room for improvement," said Georgia Conservation Voters Executive Director Chris Osborne. "Talking about the environment is not enough – measuring improvements and providing accountability for conservation-minded voters is a necessary task."

This session, the conservation community made strides in expanding incentives for land conservation, obtaining funding to clean up dirty school buses, protecting part of Jekyll Island with easy beach access and defeating efforts to make it more difficult to remove billboards. However, efforts to create a funding mechanism for all forms of transportation, including rail transit options, and statutory criteria to protect communities from unnecessary water transfers failed during the last hours of the 2007-08 legislative session.

"We're pleased to see a greater awareness of how environmental issues from water to transportation to energy affect the lives of Georgians every day. But there is still need for more leadership from the General Assembly if we are to tackle challenges before they turn into a crisis," said Mr. Osborne.

The scorecard also showed that freshmen legislators scored higher than their colleagues when it came to voting on environmental issues. In the House, freshmen legislators averaged five points higher than their colleagues and in the Senate, they averaged ten points higher.

Mr. Osborne continued, "It's encouraging to see that freshmen legislators are more consistently voting for quality of life issues that are important to future generations, such as clean air and water, energy efficiency, renewable energy and transportation solutions, to help Georgia meet the challenges posed by rapid growth and development."

A total of seven legislators scored a perfect 100 percent. Sixteen legislators, including twelve representatives and four senators, scored below 40 percent.

In the 2007-08 General Assembly Scorecard, legislators were scored on the number of pro-conservation votes cast out of the total number measured. The Senate was scored on 17 votes and the House was scored on 16 votes. Among the votes included are those promoting land conservation, incentivizing energy efficiency and renewable energy, expanding funding for rail transit and transportation and protecting Jekyll Island.

"We hope the scorecard will be a resource for the many Georgians who want to separate state legislators who are acting to protect Georgia's environment from those who just talk about it," said Osborne.

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The *2007-08 Legislative Scorecard* provides a synopsis of key votes on issues selected as priorities by Georgia Conservation Voters and over a dozen of the state's leading conservation organizations prior to each year of the 2007-08 legislative session. The priorities are part of a common agenda aiming to protect our health, conserve our natural resources and promote our economy.

The full *2007-08 Legislative Scorecard* is available online at <http://www.gavoters.com/>.

## **2007-08 General Assembly Notable Scores**

### **Averages by Chamber**

**Senate:** 62%

**House:** 63%

### **Averages by Party**

#### **Democrat**

**Senate:** 76%

**House:** 76%

#### **Republican**

**Senate:** 53%

**House:** 54%

### **Average Scores: Freshmen compared to Overall**

**Senate freshmen vs. Senate overall:** 72% vs. 62%

**House freshmen vs. House overall:** 68% vs. 63%

### **100% Scores**

**Senate:** Vincent Fort, Bill Jackson

**House:** Roberta Abdul-Salaam, Stephanie Benfield, Doug McKillip, Robert Mumford, Mary Margaret Oliver

### **40% and Below Scores**

**Senate:** Joseph Carter (36%), Judson Hill (40%), Mitch Seabaugh (40%), Jim Whitehead (38%)

**House:** Mark Burkhalter (38%), Charlice Byrd (29%), Doug Collins (35%), Matt Dollar (40%), Hugh Floyd (40%), Ron Forster (40%), Tom Graves (31%), Jeff Lewis (35%), Jeff May (40%), James Mills (31%), Jay Neal (36%), Martin Scott (31%)

### **Largest Increases in Score:**

**Senate:** Jack Murphy (14% to 47%), Preston Smith (50% to 71%), J.B. Powell (46% to 64%), Regina Thomas (64% to 80%), Greg Goggans (50% to 60%), Jeff Mullis (46% to 56%)

**House:** Lynn Smith (20% to 80%), Charles Jenkins (33% to 82%), John Lunsford (15% to 64%), Ron Stephens (13% to 60%), Vance Smith (13% to 56%)

### **Largest Decreases in Score:**

**Senate:** Ed Harbison (79% to 60%), Renee Unterman (69% to 50%), Robert Brown (92% to 75%), Gloria Butler (86% to 69%), Judson Hill (57% to 40%)

**House:** Charlice Byrd (69% to 29%), David Lucas (82% to 50%), Hugh Floyd (69% to 40%), Darryl Jordan (100% to 71%), Matt Dollar (67% to 40%)

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*Georgia Conservation Voters works to preserve and enhance the quality of life for all Georgians by making conservation issues a top priority with Georgia's elected officials, political candidates and voters. For more information, visit [www.gavoters.com](http://www.gavoters.com).*