

Senate Bill 445

By: Senators Gooch of the 51st, Beach of the 21st, Miller of the 49th, Ginn of the 47th and Dugan of the 30th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To amend Title 32 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to highways, bridges, and ferries, so as to provide for standards for contracts entered into by the Department of Transportation; to provide for a contract bidding process and award procedure; to prohibit camping on portions of the state highway system or property owned by the department; to provide for a definition; to declare property used for camping purposes in violation of such prohibition as contraband; to provide for forfeiture of such property; to provide for applicability; to provide for a penalty; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Title 32 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to highways, bridges, and ferries, is amended in Code Section 32-2-60, relating to authority of the Department of Transportation to contract, form and content of construction contracts, federal-aid highway contracts, and bonds, by revising subsections (d) and (e) as follows:

~~“(d) The provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this Code section shall be applicable only to federal-aid highway contracts.”~~

~~(e)~~(d)(1) When the estimated amount of any department construction contract exceeds \$300 million, performance and payment bonds shall be required in the amount of at least the total amount payable by the terms of the contract unless the department, after public notice, makes a written determination supported by specific findings that single bonds in such amount are not reasonably available, and the board approves such determination in a public meeting. In such event, the estimated value of the construction portion of the contract, excluding right of way acquisition and engineering, shall be guaranteed by a combination of security including, but not limited to, the following:

(A) Payment, performance, surety, cosurety, or excess layer surety bonds;

(B) Letters of credit;

(C) Guarantees of the contractor or its parent companies;

(D) Obligations of the United States and of its agencies and instrumentalities; or

(E) Cash collateral;

provided, however, that the aggregate total guarantee of the project may not use a corporate guarantee of more than 35 percent. The combination of such guarantees shall be determined at the discretion of the department, subject to the approval of the board; provided, however, that such aggregate guarantees shall include not less than \$300 million of performance and payment bonds and shall equal not less than 100 percent of the contractor's obligation under the construction portion of the contract.

(2) Payment guarantees approved pursuant to this subsection shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of Code Section 13-10-61. Contractors requesting payment under construction contracts guaranteed pursuant to this subsection shall provide the following certification under oath with each such request: 'All payments due to subcontractors and suppliers from previous payment received under the contract have been made, and timely payments will be made from the proceeds of the payment covered by this certification.'

SECTION 2.

Said title is further amended in Code Section 32-2-69, relating to bidding process and award of contract, by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

"(f) The signed, notarized affidavit required in subsection (b) of Code Section 13-10-91 shall be submitted to the department prior to the award of any contract."

SECTION 3.

Said title is further amended in Article 1 of Chapter 6, relating to general provisions regarding the regulation of maintenance and use of public roads, by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"32-6-6.

(a) For purposes of this Code section, the term 'camping' means temporary habitation outdoors as evidenced by one or more of the following actions: the erection or use of tents or other shelters; the laying down of sleeping bags, blankets, or other materials used for bedding; the placing or storing of personal belongings; the making of a fire; or the act of cooking.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person to use any portion of road on the state highway system or any property owned by the department for camping.

(c) Any items used for activity prohibited by subsection (b) of this Code section are declared contraband and shall be subject to forfeiture according to the terms, provisions, conditions, and procedures set out in Chapter 16 of Title 9.

(d) Nothing in this Code section shall prohibit the normal, customary, and temporary use of safety rest areas, welcome centers, tourist centers, and other property of the department or state highway system specifically designated for purposes of resting, sleeping, eating, or other similar activities by persons traveling by vehicle.

(e) This Code section shall not apply to state or local government officials or employees acting in their official capacity and while performing activities as part of their official duties and shall not apply to any employee of a contractor or subcontractor performing duties under a contract with the department.

(f) Any person convicted of violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor."

SECTION 4.

Said title is further amended in Code Section 32-7-4, relating to procedure for disposition of property, by revising subparagraph (a)(2)(A) and paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b) as follows:

"(2)(A) When an entire parcel acquired by the department, a county, or a municipality, or any interest therein, is being disposed of, it may be acquired under the right created in paragraph (1) of this subsection at such price as may be agreed upon, but in no event less than the price paid for its acquisition. When only remnants or portions of the original acquisition are being disposed of, they may be acquired for a price no less than 15 percent under the market value thereof at the time the department, county, or municipality decides the property is no longer needed. The department shall use a real estate appraiser with knowledge of the local real estate market who is licensed in Georgia to establish the fair market value of the property prior to listing such property."

"(2)(A) Such sale of property may be made by the department or a county or municipality by listing the property through a real estate broker licensed under Chapter 40 of Title 43 who has a place of business located in the ~~county where the property is located or outside the county if no such business is located in the county where the property is located~~ state. Property shall be listed for a period of at least ~~three months~~. ~~Such property shall not be sold at less than its fair market value 30 days.~~ The department shall use a real estate appraiser with knowledge of the local real estate market who is licensed in Georgia to establish the fair market value of the property prior to listing such property. If the highest offer received to purchase is less than the appraised value but within 15 percent of such value, the department, county, or municipality may accept such offer and convey the property in accordance with the provisions of subsection (c) of this Code section. All sales shall be approved by the commissioner on behalf of the department or shall be approved by the governing

authority of the county or municipality at a regular meeting that shall be open to the public, and public comments shall be allowed at such meeting regarding such sale.

(B) Commencing at the time of the listing of the property as provided in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the department, county, or municipality shall provide for a notice to be inserted once a week for two weeks in the legal organ of the county indicating the names of real estate brokers listing the property for the political subdivision. The department, county, or municipality may advertise in newspapers, on the Internet, or in magazines relating to the sale of real estate or similar publications.

(C) The department, county, or municipality shall have the right to reject any and all offers, in its discretion, and to sell such property pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(3)(A) Such sale of property may be made by the department, a county, or a municipality to the highest bidder at a public auction conducted by an auctioneer licensed under Chapter 6 of Title 43. ~~Such property shall not be sold at less than its fair market value.~~ If the highest offer received to purchase is less than the appraised value but within 15 percent of such value, the department, county, or municipality may accept such offer and convey the property in accordance with the provisions of subsection (c) of this Code section.

(B) The department, county, or municipality shall provide for a notice to be inserted once a week for the two weeks immediately preceding the auction in the legal organ of the county including, at a minimum, the following items:

- (i) A description sufficient to enable the public to identify the property;
- (ii) The time and place of the public auction;
- (iii) The right of the department or the county or municipality to reject any one or all of the bids;
- (iv) All the conditions of sale; and
- (v) Such further information as the department or the county or municipality may deem advisable as in the public interest.

The department, county, or municipality may advertise in magazines relating to the sale of real estate or similar publications.

(C) The department, county, or municipality shall have the right to reject any and all offers, in its discretion, and to sell such property pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection."

SECTION 5.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.