



2025 Legislative Review

April 29, 2025

Holland & Knight

2025 Legislative Priorities

The Commission identified three legislative priorities for the 2025 legislative session:

- (1) Increase in the Hotel/Motel tax from 6 percent to 8 percent
- (2) Creation of a 911 Fee Study Committee
- (3) Increase in the per diem rate for housing state prisoners in the county's correctional facility

Legislative Success!

House Bill 498: Garden City Charm and Tourism Act, Representative Lynn Gladney

- The hotel/motel tax rate legislation authorized an increase from 6% to 8%
- Projected to generate an additional \$2 million in revenue
- Funds will support:
 - Destination Augusta marketing
 - Maintenance of the new arena
 - Unrestricted city projects

Legislative Success!

House Resolution 429: House Study Committee for Funding for NextGen 911

- Establishes a House study committee to study 911 fees. The committee will be comprised of five members
- The Committee is charged with studying and identifying any reforms necessary to provide adequate funding to support the transition from legacy 9-1-1 centers to modern Next Generation 9-1-1 centers to ensure that current and future 911 operations are funded
- The Senate has indicated that it will undertake a similar study through the Senate Public Safety Committee

Legislative Success!

House Bill 68, General Appropriations Bill

- The budget includes a line item to increase the per diem rate for housing state prisoners in county correctional institutions by \$6 per day
- The new per diem is \$30 per day
- The total amount budgeted statewide for prisoners in county correctional institutions is \$9.9M

Legislative Success!

House Bill 850, Augusta Richmond County, Provide for Homestead Exemption, Representative Mark Newton

- The legislation was requested by the Commission pursuant to the decision to “opt out” of the statewide mandates imposed by HB 581
- The delegation created a local framework for Augusta Richmond to meet local needs
- Our countywide homestead exemption includes provisions unique to Augusta, including a 3.2 percent CPI adjustment cap, an exemption for homestead properties of more than five acres, and clarifying language relating to CUVA easements

Legislative Success!

Defeat of House Bill 75, “Justice for Fred and Peanut Act”

- This bill would require local governments to obtain a court order before euthanizing an animal that was seized from private property without a warrant. It would also allow owners to seek damages of up to \$5,000 if their pet is lost, injured, or killed due to government negligence.
- Animal Services Director Hill and I worked together to identify the significant cost and administrative burden that this legislation would create for Augusta.
- Successfully lobbied to hold the bill in committee.

Next Steps

Preparation for the 2026 legislative session begins now!

- Participate in the 911 fee study committees
- Engage with legislative delegation, members of the General Assembly and leadership
- Discussions with Commissioners, Mayor and staff about 2026 legislative priorities
- Formal adoption of 2026 legislative priorities
- Present legislative priorities to the legislative delegation