



DOAA

Georgia Department
of Audits & Accounts

Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor

January 13, 2026

Honorable Kim Schofield
State Representative
608-C Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill (LC 62 0239)

Dear Representative Schofield:

This bill contains several provisions related to air quality monitoring and reporting.

- All new or renovated public buildings, schools, and multifamily residences must be equipped with carbon monoxide monitors installed within 20 feet of any source of combustion. Monitors would be inspected annually by state-certified inspectors approved by the Department of Public Health (DPH).
- The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Protection Division (EPD) would be required to deploy at least 50 ambient air monitors statewide and submit an annual ambient air report to the General Assembly.
- DPH and EPD would be required to establish a wildfire smoke preparedness program for all public schools, including deployment of air quality monitors and creation of smoke readiness plans, among other items.
- EPD would be required to maintain and update a community health and cumulative impacts map.
- Major developments as defined in the bill would require biodiversity offsets and require these to be monitored for ten years, with all inspections required by this article performed by inspectors certified by EPD.
- EPD and DPH would be required to issue joint annual reports to the General Assembly including information such as air quality trends and the progress of biodiversity offsets, among other items.

Data from DNR and DPH estimate this bill would increase state expenditures by approximately \$33.2 million in fiscal year 2027, with costs decreasing to between \$5.2 million and \$5.6 million by fiscal year 2030 (see **Table 1**). The range is the result of two options for ambient air monitors that are discussed in further detail below the table.

Table 1: Four-Year Projected Fiscal Impact

	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Department of Public Health				
- Carbon Monoxide Inspector Certification & Wildfire Smoke Preparedness	\$401,000	\$327,000	\$327,000	\$327,000
DNR Environmental Protection Division				
- Ambient Air Monitoring	\$0	\$523,000 to \$1.9M	\$1.5M to \$5.5M	\$965,000 to \$1.3M
- School Air Monitoring	\$32.3M	\$3.6M	\$3.6M	\$3.6M
- Biodiversity Monitoring	<u>\$521,000</u>	<u>\$365,000</u>	<u>\$365,000</u>	<u>\$365,000</u>
Total	\$33.2M	\$4.8M to \$6.1M	\$5.8M to \$9.8M	\$5.2M to \$5.6M

Details of the estimated costs are below.

- **Department of Public Health** – Carbon monoxide monitors that must be installed in new and renovated public buildings, schools, and multifamily residences must be inspected by individuals certified by DPH. The agency must also work with EPD to establish a wildfire smoke preparedness program for public schools.

DPH would incur one-time and annual costs for the responsibilities in the bill. Annual costs include three employees—a supervisor for a new air quality program, a program consultant, and a database analyst—at a total cost of \$305,000. Other annual costs include \$15,000 for IT costs for employees, \$6,800 to maintain a registry of certified inspectors, and \$300 for certification for employees.

One-time costs include \$66,000 for the design, development, and implementation of the inspector registry and \$14,600 for initial training and certification for staff.

- **DNR Environmental Protection Division** – EPD has a wide range of responsibilities under the bill, including deployment and operation of new statewide ambient air monitors, deployment of air monitors in public schools, and biodiversity monitoring and mapping.
 - *Statewide ambient air monitoring* – EPD must deploy statewide ambient air monitors on a schedule required by the bill – 25% by December 31, 2027 (FY 2028) and 75% by December 31, 2028 (FY 2029). According to EPD, the low estimate assumes the use of a \$14,100 monitor that has a relatively short life span (2 years) before measurements are degraded. The high estimate assumes the use of a higher quality instrument (\$111,200) currently used by EPD in limited instances.

Regardless of the instrument, the program would require a combination of full-time and part-time employees. Full-time employees include those in field operations, operations support, quality assurance, and data analysis. The number required for full deployment would be 11-15 full-time employees at a cost of \$844,600 to \$1.15 million, depending on the equipment used. Part-time employee costs are estimated at \$42,250 a year.
 - *Public school air monitoring* – Air monitors in schools are required as part of the wildfire smoke preparedness program. The one-time cost of the monitors is estimated to be \$32.3 million (\$14,107 per device and 2,288 schools). Ongoing costs of \$3.6 million include equipment and supplies for each monitor. Not included in this estimate is any cost of training staff needed to check the monitors and review the data.
 - *Biodiversity review, monitoring, and mapping* – EPD’s annual costs include three wildlife biologists at a total cost of \$259,000, a single GIS specialist at a cost of

\$73,600, and regular operating expenses (travel, fuel, other) of \$32,000. There would also be one-time costs of \$156,000 in year one for vehicles for the three biologists.

In addition to the items above, the bill requires new and renovated schools to have carbon monoxide detectors installed within 20 feet of any source of combustion. These costs were determined to be minimal and able to be absorbed into the construction or renovation costs.

There are additional factors that may have an impact on the cost of implementing this bill but are unknown at this time. These are described below.

- The statewide air monitor estimate assumes the minimum number required by the bill (50). If additional monitors are needed to address all priority areas included in the bill, the costs would increase proportionally.
- DPH and EPD have joint responsibility for the wildfire smoke preparedness program. The estimate assumes that new DPH staff and existing EPD staff can assist with the development of smoke readiness plans and shelter protocols, but the effort may require assistance from other entities such as local fire departments, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, and the Georgia Forestry Commission.
- We were also unable to provide a reasonable estimate of the cost to upgrade HVAC filtration of public schools.

Respectfully,



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State Auditor



Richard Dunn, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/RD/nac