

Senate Bill 2 – The FAST Act

This legislation (SECTION 2) mandates that cities and counties which charge any regulatory fees (license or permit fees) or have any regulatory requirements to establish a schedule of such fees and requirements which shall include the time lines necessary for processing completed applications and a list of all documentation needed by applicants to meet regulatory requirements.

Upon receipt of an application related to any fee, the applicant will pay only 50 percent of the fee. The local government must then notify the applicant whether an application is complete. Whenever the local government does not meet its deadline for acting on a "complete" application, the associated fees will be reduced by 10 percent for each 10 days said action is delayed.

Upon approval (or denial, presumably) of an application, a county shall inform the applicant of the amount of fees which are due, reduced by the amount, if any, related to the discount for going beyond the county's established time line. If the amount of fees due has been reduced by more than 50 percent of the original fee, the license or permit must be issued along with any refund of the fees due to the applicant.

Any delay in the processing of an application outside the control of the county that is "directly caused by or attributable to a natural disaster, a state of emergency, or an mandated federal or state agency review or approval" shall not count towards the county's application processing time line so long as the possibility of the delay is included in the aforementioned schedule. There is no provision to account for any delay caused by the applicant.

Each county which imposes regulatory requirements must establish an expedited licensing and permitting process that will give priority processing to those wishing to pay more, but the county cannot charge more than two times the original fee amount. The same fee reduction mechanism is to apply.

Each county shall annually review its activities which require the collection of personal information and determine whether such information could be shared with or acquired from other agencies of government (federal, state or local) rather than requiring licensed or regulated individuals/entities to provide this information to multiple agencies.

Lastly, in SECTION 5, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) shall establish a voluntary "Ready for Partnership" certification program for each city and county in Georgia. Local governments may apply to receive RFP certification, which will be based on the aforementioned metrics in processing licenses and permits.