

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Terry Cole, Public Affairs Director

Phone: 770-270-7283

Email: [terry.cole@gatrans.com](mailto:terry.cole@gatrans.com)

## **JOINT STATEMENT ON WHITEPATH ELECTRIC RELIABILITY PROJECT**

*In consultation with Speaker David Ralston and Senator Steve Gooch, Georgia Transmission Corporation releases the following statement on the Whitepath Electric Reliability Project:*

Following months of extensive analysis at the request of the local community, Georgia Transmission has determined that Highway 515 is a viable corridor for the Whitepath Electric Reliability Project. Conversations are underway with the Georgia Department of Transportation to develop a proposed route for the project adjacent to Highway 515 that meets engineering and safety constraints.

The Highway 515 result, led by House Speaker David Ralston and Senator Steve Gooch, is a culmination of input from community partners including citizens, civic organizations, and elected officials.

“This outcome demonstrates that workable solutions can be achieved when parties come together in a cooperative spirit for the betterment of the community,” said House Speaker David Ralston. “Sen. Gooch and I are pleased that our partners at Georgia Transmission and Amicalola EMC have done their due diligence in service to the community and are now able to take the next step in ensuring reliable electricity for households and businesses in Gilmer County.”

Following public meetings last year proposing a route for the 46 kV sub-transmission line along Boardtown Road, Georgia Transmission responded to property owners and other community voices to undertake an extensive review and analysis of two previously identified alternate corridors - Highway 515 and an abandoned CSX railroad corridor - that were ruled out due to limitations including a request denied by GDOT. Upon further discussions with GDOT, Georgia Transmission was able to identify an appropriate corridor and, following a detailed engineering study, was able to address terrain, access, and environmental issues adjacent to Highway 515. This has confirmed that the Highway 515 Corridor is a practical and feasible alternative.

In consultation with Speaker Ralston and Sen. Gooch, Georgia Transmission has developed a preliminary route alignment where easements to be purchased by Georgia Transmission will be used along with existing GDOT right of way and other public rights of way to overcome the route challenges. This tailored approach to engineering the route will minimize impacts to both public rights of way and GDOT right of way by allowing the transmission line to co-locate with areas of the existing highway.

Georgia Transmission Vice President of Project Services John Raese said, “Georgia Transmission is proud that we were able to honor our word to the community while fulfilling our

mission of helping to keep the lights on for Gilmer County. Although considerable work remains to be done we appreciate the active engagement of Amicalola EMC and its members, and the leadership of Speaker Ralston and Senator Gooch, in identifying a solution to the critical electric reliability need in the area.”

Georgia Transmission will soon begin undertaking the process necessary for advancing the route along Highway 515, including following the prescribed process for transmission line routing for this new corridor. This includes outreach to property owners in the Highway 515 area and conducting additional public meetings. Updates about these activities will be available at [www.gatrans.com/whitepath](http://www.gatrans.com/whitepath).

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