

# HB289



The Alabama Jobs Enhancement Act was passed last year to provide clarity to an issue that could have crippled Alabama's economic development efforts. The bill was necessary to provide better understanding regarding the need for economic developers and site selectors to be exempt from registering as lobbyists to engage in the economic development process, maintain the confidentiality of companies considering expanding or locating in Alabama. Thankfully, the bill was passed and signed into law allowing economic development professionals the opportunity to continue to grow Alabama's economy.

This year HB289 seeks to remove the sunset provision contained in last year's legislation to insure Alabama remains competitive in the economic development arena.

During the session last year, there was a concerted effort to mischaracterize the bill as having a negative impact on the ethics law. That assertion was patently untrue and regardless of how much hyperbole and misinformation was presented last year, the Legislature passed the bill. The Jobs Enhancement Act has been in effect for a year, and none of the dire predictions have come to pass. They haven't come to pass simply because none of the assertions leveled in the last legislative session were based in fact. HB289 may be subject to similar attacks this year, and it is imperative that lawmakers again recognize the necessity of the legislation.

If HB289 does not pass, Alabama's economic development effort will again be mired in ambiguity and uncertainty. Site selectors will not consider Alabama as a location if they must violate their client's confidentiality agreement in order to even consider an Alabama location. Confidentiality is critical in the economic development process. Companies and site selection professionals involved in a search for a potential site or companies, must be able to rely on economic developers to maintain that confidentiality until it is appropriate for the company's identity to be revealed. Failure to pass HB289 means economic developers and site selectors would be required to register as lobbyists and disclose the identity of these companies. This requirement alone would make Alabama unattractive for not only new investment, but hamper expansion of Alabama's existing companies as well.

HB289 doesn't impact the ethics law. This legislation simply exempts site selectors and economic developers from the requirement to register as lobbyists. The economic developers that work to grow Alabama's economy and the site selectors that represent their clients in the process are not lobbyists.

HB289, when passed, will allow the economic development process to continue without impediments and insure Alabama's successful economic development efforts move the state forward.