



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Fraudulent Filing Activity Affects Processing of 2015 Georgia Tax Returns**

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Commissioner Lynne Riley today announced that due to increased fraudulent activity this filing season, 2015 Georgia Income Tax Returns may take longer to process.

“The 2016 tax filing and processing period has been complicated for the Department of Revenue for a variety of factors,” Riley stated, “Whether it be one of the many data breaches that have been reported in the last year, or a spoofing or phishing scam, every incident requires us to modify our systems to protect the affected taxpayers.” The Department has already successfully blocked over \$17 million in fraudulently filed returns in 2016. As criminals become more sophisticated in their attempts to violate taxpayers’ identities and steal precious tax dollars, the Department must continually update fraud defense strategies to thwart their efforts.

The Department relies on employers to provide W-2 information that is used to verify items on the Georgia Income Tax Return. The Department has no recourse if this information is not timely remitted. The lack of this corroborating data may lead to processing delays. Any error on a return will also require additional work effort by Department personnel.

Congress and the Internal Revenue Service have admitted to allowing over \$5 billion dollars to be paid out to criminals who have filed fraudulent returns in past years, requiring taxpayers to underwrite these losses. In order to prevent this from happening at the State level, the Department of Revenue is utilizing state of the art fraud defense technology to review every return.

The Department of Revenue encourages Georgia taxpayers to register with the agency’s Georgia Tax Center to better monitor the status of their refunds at <https://gtc.dor.ga.gov/>. Individuals may use the “[Where’s my refund?](#)” app, or call 1-877-423-6711 and select option #2 to check the status of their return. Taxpayers are also encouraged to adjust payroll withholdings with their employer to receive the benefit of their earnings throughout the year. These actions will help to reduce the chance of becoming victims of identity theft.

The Department continues to work diligently to process and release tax refunds as efficiently as possible, and is taking extra precautions to verify that funds are released to the rightful recipient.

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