

## House Resolution 251

By: Representatives Stephens of the 164<sup>th</sup>, Bryant of the 160<sup>th</sup>, Purcell of the 159<sup>th</sup>, Stephens of the 161<sup>st</sup>, and Gordon of the 162<sup>nd</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Supporting the development, construction, and implementation of a cruise ship terminal  
2 facility in the Savannah Harbor; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, tourism is Savannah's major industry, with 6.33 million visitors last year who  
4 spent \$1.9 billion and supported 22,000 jobs; and

5 WHEREAS, this industry could grow exponentially if the city were to capture a portion of  
6 the nation's \$38 billion cruise ship industry; and

7 WHEREAS, 13.2 million passengers cruised in 2008, a five percent increase over 2007, and  
8 demand continues to exceed the supply for cruise ship facilities; and

9 WHEREAS, 35 new cruise ships are scheduled to be delivered between 2009 and 2012, with  
10 a total of 69,200 new berths; and

11 WHEREAS, of the top four cruise destinations, the Caribbean, Alaska, the Bahamas, and  
12 Bermuda, Savannah is positioned to serve all but Alaska, and a Savannah based cruise line  
13 would serve 85 percent of the most appealing destinations; and

14 WHEREAS, the cruise industry has established 30 North American embarkation ports within  
15 a driving distance for 75 percent of their cruise passengers; and

16 WHEREAS, the industry capacity utilization rate for 2008 was 104 percent, and despite the  
17 economic downturn in 2009, the cruise industry continues to grow with 13.4 million guests  
18 sailing last year and 14.3 million guests projected to sail by the end of this year; and

19 WHEREAS, embarkation ports in North America are becoming crowded, and Miami, Port  
20 Everglades, and Port Canaveral are running out of land for expansion while existing facilities  
21 are fully utilized; and

22 WHEREAS, the cruise industry has determined that 40 percent of leisure travelers in  
23 America are interested in taking a cruise during the next two years, and that number rises to  
24 46 percent among leisure travelers who are interested in visiting Georgia, which shows a  
25 robust market that is destined to grow in the years ahead; and

26 WHEREAS, cruises still retain greatest appeal among older travelers, and this profile is  
27 consistent with the profile of adults who are interested in visiting Savannah, particularly  
28 since it is the nation's largest urban historic landmark district, showcasing azaleas, live oak  
29 trees, cobblestone streets, and nationally renowned squares; and

30 WHEREAS, there is no embarkation port located geographically between Charleston, South  
31 Carolina, and Jacksonville, Florida, and while Jacksonville is Savannah's closest competitor  
32 to the South, it does not offer a nationally recognized historic district, which is most  
33 appealing to passengers seeking day excursions; and

34 WHEREAS, the Interstate 16 transportation corridor provides easy access to travelers,  
35 particularly those from the metropolitan Atlanta and North Georgia areas desiring to embark  
36 from a convenient cruise port location in Savannah, thus saving money and travel time and  
37 avoiding expensive air fares; and

38 WHEREAS, preliminary estimates indicate that a home cruise ship port in Savannah could  
39 create an industry of up to \$100 million a year, with a potential of hundreds of new  
40 sustainable jobs and resulting in an economic development potential for Georgia of over  
41 \$1 billion during the next decade; and

42 WHEREAS, making Savannah Georgia's cruise port could generate millions of dollars in  
43 new state taxes, thus keeping these resources in Georgia versus other neighboring states.

44 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
45 the members of this body strongly support public and private efforts to make Savannah the  
46 first cruise ship port in Georgia.

47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body is committed to the development of a cruise  
48 ship terminal in the Savannah Harbor that will provide new jobs and enhance the overall  
49 economic development of Georgia.

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
51 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the public and the press.