

Senate Resolution 1064

By: Senators Ligon, Jr. of the 3rd, Jeffares of the 17th, Hooks of the 14th, Hill of the 4th and James of the 35th

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Department of Natural Resources to take measures to preserve, protect, and
2 promote the important historical heritage and beautiful natural treasures of Sapelo Island,
3 Georgia; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, Greater Sapelo Island of McIntosh County, Georgia, is this state's fourth largest
5 barrier island and the home of wildlife, treasured historical structures, and the significant
6 community consisting of the Geechee Gullah people; and

7 WHEREAS, approximately 97 percent of Sapelo Island is owned by the State of Georgia and
8 is managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, while the remaining 3 percent
9 of the island is under private ownership; and

10 WHEREAS, the island also consists of the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research
11 Reserve, the University of Georgia Marine Institute, and the Reynold's Mansion State Park;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, the Geechee Gullah people are the direct descendants of the slaves of Thomas
14 Spalding who was the original landowner of Sapelo Island, and following the conclusion of
15 the Civil War, ownership of designated lands of the island were legally transferred to these
16 original freed men; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1983, Georgia law established the Sapelo Island Heritage Authority for the
18 purpose of preserving the culture in the endangered historical areas of Sapelo Island; and

19 WHEREAS, the unique Geechee Gullah culture and their community is of significant
20 historical value to the citizens of this state; and

21 WHEREAS, access to the educational historical sites and natural beauty of Sapelo Island by
22 the public is limited and could be expanded; and

23 WHEREAS, the island has an abundance of significant historical sites that need state funding
24 for conservation, renovation, and promotion as tourist attractions; and

25 WHEREAS, much of the island is composed of natural habitats which need to be managed
26 and protected and made available for viewing and enjoyment by the public; and

27 WHEREAS, in order to preserve the historical heritage of the island and promote economic
28 development for the island, the Department of Natural Resources needs to study the
29 preservation of significant historical sites and promotion of and access to Sapelo Island.

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
31 urge the Department of Natural Resources to study and make recommendations for action
32 on the following issues:

- 33 (1) The need for preservation and revitalization of historical sites on Sapelo Island;
- 34 (2) Means by which accessibility and awareness of the island's natural beauty and
35 historical sites may be improved; and
- 36 (3) Development, incorporation, and promotion of the Geechee Gullah people and
37 culture as a part of the historical heritage of the island.

38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
39 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Department of Natural Resources,
40 the Sapelo Island Heritage Authority, and Governor Nathan Deal.