

House Bill 684 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Buckner of the 130th, Neal of the 1st, Stephens of the 164th, Greene of the 149th, Abrams of the 84th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to state parks and recreational areas generally, so as to authorize the Department of
3 Natural Resources to transfer certain operating responsibilities for state parks and
4 recreational areas to local governing authorities on certain conditions; to provide for related
5 matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state
9 parks and recreational areas generally, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as
10 follows:

11 "12-3-35.

12 (a) For purposes of this Code section, the term 'change in services' means the closing of
13 a state park or recreational area, a permanent change of a primary existing operational
14 function, or a reduction in the hours of operation or services offered at a state park or
15 recreational area location by 50 percent or more.

16 (b) Prior to making a change in services, the Department of Natural Resources shall
17 provide 60 days' notice to the governing authority of each municipality and county in
18 which the state park or recreational area is located regarding the specific proposed change
19 in services. The notice required by this Code section shall be made in writing and sent to
20 the applicable chairperson of the county commissioners and the mayor of the municipality.

21 (c) The department is authorized to transfer management responsibilities for a state park
22 or recreational area, or parts contained therein, that are the subject of a proposed change
23 in services to a local governing authority in which the state park or recreational area is
24 located. The transferring of any management responsibilities pursuant to this Code section
25 shall include the authority of the local governing authority to provide staff and funding for
26 designated operations and functions within the management and control of the local

27 governing authority. The transfer of total or partial management responsibilities provided
28 for under this Code section shall occur only upon a finding by the commissioner of natural
29 resources and the local governing authority that such a transfer is in the best interest of the
30 public and will best promote or preserve the natural, cultural, or recreational resource.
31 (d) The commissioner of natural resources shall notify the Board of Natural Resources of
32 a pending transfer of part or all of the operations of a state park or recreational area to a
33 local governing authority. Such notice shall be made in writing and at a regularly
34 scheduled, publicly held meeting of the board."

35 **SECTION 2.**

36 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
37 without such approval.

38 **SECTION 3.**

39 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.