

House Resolution 930

By: Representatives Gilliard of the 162nd, Clark of the 108th, Hitchens of the 161st, and Stephens of the 164th

A RESOLUTION

1 Encouraging the State of Georgia to endorse the Stand4Forests platform and its objectives;
2 and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia endeavors to be a good steward of its resources and
4 capacity for economic development; and

5 WHEREAS, standing forests provide our communities with benefits that are crucial for
6 successful economic development, including clean air, fresh water, protection from flooding
7 and drought, habitats for diverse species, and a wide array of recreational and tourist
8 activities; and

9 WHEREAS, there is scientific consensus regarding the reality of climate change and the
10 connection between deforestation and the combustion of carbon-based fuels with the
11 increased atmospheric presence of greenhouse gasses, which translates to a rise in global
12 temperature; and

13 WHEREAS, climate science shows that cities in the Southeast, including those in Georgia,
14 are particularly vulnerable to climate change, which represents a serious threat to businesses,
15 neighborhoods, infrastructure, and ecosystems in the region; and

16 WHEREAS, climate-change-related extreme heat and weather events are expected to
17 increasingly impact infrastructure and human health throughout Georgia; and

18 WHEREAS, the combined climate disruption from frequent extreme rainfall and sea level
19 rise is already increasing flood frequency and impacting property values, municipal credit
20 ratings, and infrastructure viability, particularly in Georgia's coastal regions; and

21 WHEREAS, Georgia's coastal plains and inland low-lying regions support rapidly growing
22 populations, robust tourism and film industries, essential nursery habitats for recreationally

23 and commercially important fisheries, and vital cultural resources that are highly vulnerable
24 to climate change impacts; and

25 WHEREAS, changing temperature extremes, wildfire patterns, rising sea levels, hurricanes,
26 floods, droughts, and warming ocean temperatures are expected to redistribute species and
27 greatly modify ecosystems, resulting in an increased risk to the ecological resources that
28 people depend on for their livelihood, protection, and well-being; and

29 WHEREAS, the reduced frequency and intensity of cold winter temperature extremes are
30 allowing tropical and subtropical invasive species to move northward and replace more
31 temperate species, which may negatively impact Georgia's agriculture industry; and

32 WHEREAS, rising temperatures and increases in the duration and intensity of droughts are
33 projected to increase wildfire occurrence and reduce the effectiveness of fire-control
34 practices; and

35 WHEREAS, the industrial-scale burning of wood pellets releases more carbon per unit of
36 electricity generated than other carbon-based fuels, is not a carbon-neutral form of energy,
37 and contributes to the rate of climate change and the severity of its impacts; and

38 WHEREAS, allowing existing forests to thrive serves the greatest public good as it
39 maximizes the benefits they provide, such as carbon sequestration, water and air quality
40 control, flood and erosion control, biodiversity support, low-impact recreational activities,
41 and scenic beauty; and

42 WHEREAS, in 2018, ecosystem services provided by wetland forests alone were valued at
43 \$67.3 billion; when forests are destroyed, degraded, converted to plantations, or harvested
44 to burn for bioenergy, they cease to provide those services; and

45 WHEREAS, tourism, film production, commercial fishing, insurance, real estate, agriculture,
46 and other key industries depend on a healthy environment in order to continue serving as
47 major economic drivers that benefit the residents, property owners, and visitors of Georgia;
48 and

49 WHEREAS, economic development opportunities for communities of color, indigenous
50 communities, low-income populations, and rural populations are disproportionately and

51 negatively impacted by climate change and the medical, economical, and social costs
52 associated with industrial practices; and

53 WHEREAS, it is economically, socially, and ecologically sensible to expand forest
54 protections, restore degraded forests, reduce consumption, and transition to truly clean,
55 nonpolluting sources of renewable energy, such as solar and wind energy, in order to enhance
56 economic development and tourism opportunities, reduce risk to the environment, and
57 support the economic health of Georgia citizens.

58 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
59 the members of this body encourage the State of Georgia to endorse the Stand4Forests
60 platform in its efforts to achieve the following: permanent expansion of protected lands, a
61 ban on subsidies for false clean energy solutions, accurate and transparent emissions
62 reductions, investments in forest protections, transitional economic development
63 opportunities for communities currently dependent on extractive forestry practices, and
64 provisions for more options and resources for landowners and municipalities to keep forests
65 standing and thriving.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
67 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
68 public and the press.