

Senate Resolution 1029

By: Senators Hatchett of the 50th, Walker III of the 20th, Anavitarte of the 31st, Robertson of the 29th, Brass of the 6th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the 25th anniversary of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule and commending
2 the United States Forest Service for its management of Georgia's roadless areas; and for other
3 purposes.

4 WHEREAS, since 2001, the federal Roadless Area Conservation Rule ("Roadless Rule"),
5 promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture, has protected nearly 45 million
6 acres of America's wildest public lands from unnecessary roadbuilding and development; and

7 WHEREAS, the Roadless Rule is one of America's most important bipartisan conservation
8 achievements and the result of record-breaking public support; and

9 WHEREAS, over 63,000 acres of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest's 867,000 acres
10 have been designated as roadless areas in the Blue Ridge mountains of north Georgia,
11 including portions of the Appalachian Trail, Rabun Bald, and the Cohutta adjacent roadless
12 area; and

13 WHEREAS, Georgia's roadless areas provide irreplaceable benefits, including clean drinking
14 water to local and downstream communities, crystal clear trout streams, support for local

15 economies that depend on outdoor recreation and tourism dollars, iconic hiking trails, and
16 habitat for wildlife; and

17 WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service estimates that visitors to Georgia's national
18 forests bring about \$130 million to local economies each year and support nearly 2,000 local
19 jobs; and

20 WHEREAS, roadless areas are crucial for backcountry hunters and anglers, who are major
21 contributors to Georgia's economy; and

22 WHEREAS, Georgia's roadless areas are a haven for wildlife such as black bear, deer, wild
23 turkey, grouse, and hundreds of bird species, and these areas provide the clean, cold water
24 required for trout; and

25 WHEREAS, Georgia's roadless areas contribute to the drinking water for over 3.3 million
26 Georgians, including over 75,000 people in nearby communities such as Chatsworth, Ellijay,
27 Blue Ridge, Blairsville, and Hiawassee as well as over 3 million more living farther
28 downstream in Rome, Augusta, Savannah, metro Atlanta, and other communities; and

29 WHEREAS, United States Forest Service data show that most wildfires start within 50 yards
30 of a road, and the Roadless Rule thus provides a critical safeguard against wildfire; and

31 WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service has managed roadless areas in the
32 Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest responsibly and efficiently, to the benefit of all
33 Georgians.

34 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
35 recognize the 25th anniversary of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, acknowledge the
36 importance of the rule's continued application in Georgia, and commend the United States
37 Forest Service for its management of roadless areas in Georgia.

38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
39 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the United States
40 Forest Service, the public, and the press.