Senate Resolution 108
By: Senators Jackson of the 2nd, Jones of the 10th, Rahman of the 5th, Henson of the 41st, Sims of the 12th and others

A RESOLUTION

Encouraging the State of Georgia's endorsement of the Stand4Forests platform; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, the State of Georgia endeavors to be a good steward of the state and region's environment and resources; and

WHEREAS, standing forests provide our communities with clean air, fresh water, and carbon storage; are home to thousands of unique species of plants and animals; and protect us from flooding and drought; and

WHEREAS, there is scientific consensus regarding the reality of climate change and the connection between the combustion of fossil fuels and the degradation and loss of forests that create greenhouse gasses and the warming of the planet; and

WHEREAS, climate science shows that southeastern U.S. cities, including those in Georgia, are particularly vulnerable to climate change, with expected impacts to infrastructure and human health; and

WHEREAS, logging is a significant contributor to carbon emissions and is preventing the ability of our forests to remove increasing amounts of carbon from the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, the industrial-scale use of wood pellets for electricity releases more carbon per unit of electricity generated than coal, is not a carbon neutral form of energy, and will contribute to the rate of climate change and severity of its impacts; and

WHEREAS, the combined climate disruption effects of frequent extreme rainfall events and sea level rise are already increasing flood frequency and impacting property values, municipal credit ratings, and infrastructure viability, particularly in Georgia's coastal regions; and
WHEREAS, Georgia's coastal plain and inland low-lying regions support a rapidly growing population, a robust tourism economy and other critical industries, essential nursery habitats for recreational and commercially important fisheries, and important cultural resources that are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts; and

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

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

WHEREAS, rising temperatures and increases in the duration and intensity of drought are expected to increase wildfire occurrence and reduce the effectiveness of prescribed fire practices; and

WHEREAS, the State of Georgia recognizes that the agriculture, tourism, film, fishing, and other key industries depend on a healthy environment in order to continue serving as major economic drivers that benefit the current and future residents, property owners, and visitors of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, forest protection is a crucial component of a just solution to the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, the destruction and degradation of United States forests are climate emergencies, and we are clear-cutting away a critical solution to the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, when forests are destroyed, degraded, converted to plantations, or harvested to burn for bioenergy, their climate and community benefits disappear; and

WHEREAS, communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income or rural populations disproportionately bear the impacts of climate change as well as the health, economic, and social costs associated with industrial practices; and
WHEREAS, the State of Georgia recognizes that it is economically, socially, and ecologically responsible for expanding forest protection, restoring degraded forests, reducing consumption, and transitioning to truly clean, nonpolluting sources of renewable energy, such as solar and wind energy, that pose less risk to the environment and economic health of Georgia citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body encourage the State of Georgia's endorsement of the Stand4Forests platform to support permanent expansion of protected lands, a ban on subsidies for false solutions, accurate and transparent emissions reduction, investment in forest protection, economic transition development for communities dependant on extractive forest economies, and provision for more options and resources for landowners and municipalities to keep forests standing and thriving.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to all members of the Georgia General Assembly.