



## **Environment Georgia**

PO Box 5207  
Atlanta, GA 31107

**May 9, 2024**

### House Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Bruce Westerman – Chairman  
The Honorable Raul Grijalva – Ranking Member  
1324-A Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6201

### House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands

The Honorable Tom Tiffany – Chairman  
The Honorable Joe Neguse – Ranking Member  
1328 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6201

### House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs

The Honorable Harriet Hageman – Chairwoman  
The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernandez – Ranking Member  
1331 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6201

Honorable Chairmen, Chairwomen, and Ranking members,

### **We are writing to support the swift passage of H.R. 8182, the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act, the 118th Congress.**

We deeply appreciate the efforts of advocates in Middle Georgia and Washington D.C. to fulfill the exciting vision of this Park and Preserve.

Environment Georgia has a long history of working to ensure the places that make our state special are protected for future generations. This proposed legislation will protect the pristine and wild banks of the Ocmulgee, preserve the scenic beauty of Bond Swamp and give future generations access to beautiful forests. It will also give Georgia our very first National Park.

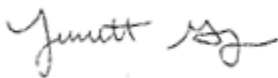
The proposed Park and Preserve is also home to a tremendous amount of environmental diversity. It houses roughly 170 species of birds, including woodpeckers, herons, raptors and warblers, as well as dozens of species of fish, reptiles, amphibians and mammals. The unique geology, at the nexus of Georgia's Coastal Plain and Piedmont region, provides unique and critical habitats for native plants and animals.

The forests that make up the proposed Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve are already an important resource for the surrounding ecosystem. Mature trees store carbon dioxide in their leaves and filter toxic chemicals from the atmosphere while also filtering millions of gallons of rain water before draining into the Ocmulgee River.

The Park and Preserve can also increase resiliency of the region by serving as a sponge for extreme rain events and flooding while holding water in the included wetlands in times of drought.

**As Georgians, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress.** Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

**Thank you for your attention to this important issue,**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jennette Gayer".

**Jennette Gayer**  
**Director, Environment Georgia**