



BRIAN KEMP
GOVERNOR

WALTER RABON
COMMISSIONER

May 8, 2024

The Honorable Austin Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
2185 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act

Dear Congressman Scott,

On behalf of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR), I am writing to express our support for the expansion of hunting and fishing opportunities afforded in the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act. As an agency committed to the stewardship of Georgia's rich natural, historic, and cultural resources, we find that the provisions outlined in this Act align with our mission and strategic goals.

GADNR appreciates the Advisory Council opportunity the Act offers the Department to assist with developing the management plan for the Preserve. GADNR supports expansion of the Preserve's boundaries to encompass transitional and upland habitats along the Ocmulgee River Corridor. This expansion is vital for the protection of diverse ecosystems that play a crucial role in maintaining biological diversity and ecological health in the region.

As the regulatory authority for hunting and fishing opportunities within the state, we would like to request that hunting and fishing be administered in the same manner as prior to establishment of the park and preserve.

Furthermore, the GADNR strongly advocates for the conservation and active management and restoration of high-priority and critical fish and wildlife habitats in this area. Active management and ongoing population monitoring are essential components to achieving these conservation goals. Such measures ensure that the Preserve operates effectively, maintaining the ecological integrity of the area while providing educational, recreational, and conservation benefits to the public.

We believe that the enactment of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act would represent a significant step forward in preserving a unique part of our state's heritage and natural beauty. It would not only safeguard the environmental and historical treasures within the

Preserve but also enhance the quality of life for all Georgians by providing increased opportunities for education, recreation, and tourism.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Walter Rabon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a stylized "R".

Walter Rabon
Commissioner
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Cc: The Honorable Brian P. Kemp, Governor of Georgia