

For Immediate Release

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Georgia Lawmakers Reauthorize the Georgia Conservation Tax Credit

Important conservation tool signed into law by Governor Kemp

ATLANTA (May 10, 2022) On May 10, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed into law House Bill 586, which reauthorizes the Georgia Conservation Tax Credit (GCTC). The measure passed the House chamber of the Georgia General Assembly on April 1 in a near unanimous vote of support for land conservation efforts in Georgia.

Earlier in the legislative session, an amendment was introduced to HB 586 to reinstate this vital incentive for land conservation efforts in Georgia. The GCTC, which expired in December 2021, will become active again on June 1, 2022, with a sunset date of December 31, 2026. Under this legislation, tax credits not to exceed \$4 million will be available for qualified private conservation projects each year.

The GCTC offers landowners a state income tax credit on their qualified conservation donation of real property, either through fee-simple transactions or by applying a permanent conservation easement to their property. The program is incredibly beneficial for conservation efforts in Georgia, given that more than 90% of land in the state is privately owned. Moreover, the tax credit allows for the conservation of additional acres without increasing the land management inventory of state agencies.

Conservation organizations celebrated lawmakers' historic commitment to the permanent conservation of Georgia's land, citing its benefits to communities' economy, natural resources, and quality of life. The Association of Georgia Land Trusts (AGLT) and the Georgia Conservancy, two registered non-profit organizations which advocate for pragmatic solutions for environmental stewardship and protection, highlighted the benefits this would bring Georgians living in various types of communities across the state.

"The Georgia Conservation Tax Credit has been instrumental in helping private landowners protect critical water resources, wildlife habitat, and productive working rural lands," commented Shane Wellendorf, the Board Chair of the Association of Georgia Land Trusts.

"We would like to thank and commend our legislators for their efforts to ensure that this vitally important conservation incentive was reauthorized," said Katherine Moore, President of the Georgia Conservancy. "Georgia's natural resources have a brighter future."

AGLT and the Georgia Conservancy expressed their thanks to several elected officials who demonstrated particular dedication and passion for this issue. These included the bill's sponsors, Rep. Sam Watson (R-172) and Sen. Steve Gooch (R-51), as well as Gov. Brian Kemp, Rep. Jon Burns (R-159), Rep. Chuck Hufstetler (R-52), and House Speaker David Ralston.

Founded in 1967, the Georgia Conservancy's mission is to protect Georgia through ecological and economic solutions for stewardship, conservation and sustainable use of the land and its resources. www.georgiaconservancy.org

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