



February 20, 2026

Senator Lee Anderson
Chairman, Senate Committee on Natural Resources and the Environment
Georgia General Assembly

Re: House Bill 983; Prescribed Burning for Silvicultural Purposes

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Anderson,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 983, which would facilitate prescribed burning for silvicultural purposes. Prescribed fire is an important tool for improving forest stand conditions and wildlife habitat and reducing hazardous fuels to decrease severe wildfire risk, yet the current regulatory patchwork across the state limits its use. House Bill 983 would streamline regulations to promote prescribed burning, and we therefore respectfully encourage you to support the legislation.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

House Bill 983 ensures regulatory certainty by eliminating the patchwork of local government regulations that restrict prescribed burning in favor of a uniform statewide approach, while striking a balance for local public interests through retained oversight mechanisms. Specifically, the legislation provides that the State of Georgia preempts the field of prescribed burning regulation for silvicultural purposes, except for county or municipality notice or permit requirements by law, ordinance, resolution, or regulation that do not restrict prescribed burning. The State of Georgia and the Georgia Forestry Commission are the appropriate regulatory bodies for prescribed burning management, not local governments.

Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation

Establishing a consistent regulatory framework reduces inefficiencies and risks for prescribed burners and landowners. One tract of land can be subject to different and potentially conflicting regulations among the municipality, county, and state, and this regulatory complexity is magnified for individuals and businesses that own or manage land in several jurisdictions. House Bill 983 simplifies regulatory oversight and provides clarity for the state, local governments, and the public.

Reducing regulatory barriers to prescribed burning will not only protect forest resources and communities from severe wildfires, but it will also help improve forest health and wildlife habitat. Georgia's fire-adapted forests—from the longleaf pines to the oak-hickory forests—depend on regular, low-intensity fires to regenerate, increase nutrients in the soil, manage competing vegetation, and control insects and disease. Prescribed burning enhances wildlife habitat for a range of nongame and game species, including wild turkey, White-tailed deer, and Northern bobwhite quail, among others, by increasing vegetative diversity, increasing the availability of forbs and grasses, improving cover, and creating diverse habitats across the landscape.

In closing, we respectfully encourage you to support House Bill 983 to reduce the regulatory burdens hindering prescribed burning in the state to support Georgia's forests, wildlife, and outdoor sporting traditions that benefit from prescribed fire. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Respectfully,



Conner Barker
Senior Coordinator, Southeastern States
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
cbarker@congressionalsportsmen.org

Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation