



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 7, 2018

CONTACT: Joselyn Baker
joselyn@butler-baker.com

**OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR GEORGIA
OUTDOOR STEWARDSHIP ACT**
Sites impact of industry on economy, jobs

Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), the nation's leading trade association for the outdoor recreation industry is supporting the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act (HB 332). OIA represents more than 1,300 manufacturers, retailers, suppliers and other key members of the \$887 billion outdoor recreation industry in the United States.

"Outdoor recreation is a significant sector of the nation's economy. In Georgia alone it drives \$27 billion in consumers spending annually and is responsible for 238,000 jobs across the state," said Cailin O'Brien-Feeney, State and Local Policy Manager for OIA. "Investments that protect and ensure continued access to lands, waters and recreational areas will not only grow this industry, but also support healthy lifestyles in local communities. We support the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act because it will make greater investment in the outdoors without raising taxes, creating fees or putting any additional burden on retailers."

The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act proposes the dedication of 75% of the state sales and use tax on outdoor recreation equipment to the protection of lands, waters and wildlife. Funds generated could be used to protect lands critical to clean drinking water, ensure access to wildlife management areas, and expand and improve parks and trails.

"We worked very hard to identify a funding mechanism that would generate enough revenue to make an impact on land conservation in Georgia without adding any additional costs or burdens to tax payers, retailers or local and state government," added Thomas Farmer, executive director of the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Coalition. "Receiving the endorsement of the Outdoor Industry Association is an incredible validation of our efforts and we are honored to be able to call them a partner as we work to pass this bill, which we believe could have a generational impact on our state."

According to data released by the Outdoor Industry Association last year, 58% of Georgians participate in outdoor recreation activities such as camping, bicycling, fishing, hunting and hiking every year.

The Georgia Constitution requires voter approval for any dedicated tax funding. If the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act and the resolution calling for the required referendum pass this year, the measure would be on the ballot in the fall of 2018. A recent poll indicated overwhelming, bi-partisan support, with 8 in 10 voters supporting the constitutional amendment.

For more information, visit www.georgiaoutdoorstewardship.org.