



March 4, 2024

To: Members of Georgia's Congressional Delegation

Dear Georgia Delegation Members,

On behalf of our more than 47,000 members, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, is expressing its support for the passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve in 2024, to express gratitude for the bipartisan federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to express support for the blossoming tribal, nontribal partnership the middle Georgia region has with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation that is centered around the co-management of Georgia's first National Park and Preserve.

This admirable civic partnership of chambers of commerce, conservation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, hunting and fishing advocates has been almost a century in the making, with chambers of commerce being intimately involved throughout the process. [In fact, the formal process of creating a National Monument out of the Ocmulgee Old Fields formally began in 1933, when the Macon Junior Chamber of Commerce purchased the sacred sites and requested they be protected.](#)

The Ocmulgee Corridor is a special place, recognized as one of America's most important wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will enhance resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the federally recognized tribe of purview, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Department of Interior, protect and enhance hunting and fishing access, as protect private property rights in middle Georgia, and serve as a robust form of economic development for the Middle Georgia region.

An independent [study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association](#) and funded by the Knight Foundation, estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years after being re-designated a National Park and Preserve, the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

The study estimates that the region should prepare for an increase of 1.16 million visitors annually and for the roughly \$76.5 Million dollar increase of annual labor income that could be generated by an influx of almost 3,000 jobs.

Macon, as the hub city of the region and the gateway to the current National Historical Park, has invested tens of millions of dollars in infrastructure projects to support the expected growth, incentivized a trail system that connects the city with the park, has donated hundreds of acres to the current historical park, and is actively investing and planning to be an even stronger partner and steward ahead of the Park and Preserve designation.

Another key economic engine of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and the live in the region. These factors, among others, are why the [Middle Georgia Robins Air Force Base Sustainability plan formally recommends that Congress create the National Park and Preserve](#). The Park and Preserve is key to the success of this mission, which, in turn, is key to the economic well-being of the region.

All of these factors are vital to the long-term viability of the middle Georgia economy and as such the Georgia Chamber of Commerce proudly supports the creation of the National Park and Preserve. We urge support for this initiative and welcome you to urge Congress to act this year so that Middle Georgia can begin to reap the economic benefits of their stewardship of this important landscape.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "C".

Chris Clark
President and CEO
Georgia Chamber of Commerce