

April 6, 2020

Office of the Governor of Georgia
206 Washington Street
Suite 203, State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

RE: Closing all State Parks in North Georgia

Dear Governor Kemp:

Thank you for your leadership during this unprecedented and difficult time for Georgia. We are grateful for the recent actions you have taken to help keep us all safe.

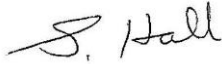
As County Commissioners in North Georgia, we are writing to request that you issue an Executive Order closing down all of the state parks located in our area for the duration of the Statewide Shelter in Place Order. While we are blessed to live in such a beautiful and abundant area of Georgia that hosts so many wonderful state parks, our constituents are highly concerned about the increased traffic to our area during the Statewide Shelter in Place Order. A significant portion of this increased traffic is coming from COVID-19 hot spots such as Atlanta or from areas outside our state.

During normal times, we are very thankful for the many Georgians and other tourists who visit and explore our area and frequent our state parks. As public awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased, there has been a recent surge in visitors to our area. It appears that these nonresidents believe our area is a safe haven because of its rural nature. To the contrary, the influx of people into our communities has had a staggering detrimental effect on our resources. Our communities simply do not have enough hospital beds or medical personnel to care for the inflated population. Similarly, there is not enough food, dry goods, fuel and other supplies to adequately provide for the numbers we are experiencing.

Many County Commissioners in our area are actively discouraging any and all nonresidents from visiting our area until the pandemic has resolved itself. The United States Forest Service has taken steps to discourage the influx of people by closing down all of its "sited" campgrounds, but the continued operation of the state parks is stressing our community's resources in a substantial manner.

On behalf of the many citizens that live in North Georgia who entrust us as County Commissioners to represent their interests, we respectfully ask you to close all of the state parks located in our area immediately.

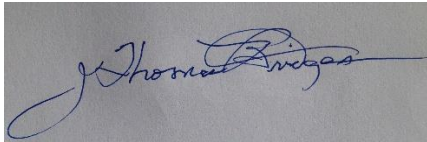
Sincerely,



Habersham County
Stacy Hall, Chairman



Rabun County Commissioner
Greg James



Franklin County Commission
Thomas Bridges, Chairman



Dade County Commission
Ted Rumley, Chairman



Fannin County Commission
Stan Helton, Chairman



Union County
Lamar Paris, Sole Commissioner



Towns County
Cliff Bradshaw, Sole Commissioner



White County Commission
Travis Turner, Chairman



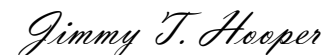
Gilmer County Commission
Charlie Paris, Chairman



Lumpkin County Commission
Chris Dockery, Chairman



Stephens County Commission
Dennis Bell, Chairman



Banks County Commission
Jimmy Hooper, Chairman