

State of South Dakota

NINETY-THIRD SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2018

655Z0258

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1003

Introduced by: Representatives Johnson, Beal, Chase, Clark, Conzet, Diedrich, Duvall, Glanzer, Goodwin, Greenfield (Lana), Haugaard, Heinemann, Holmes, Johns, Kettwig, Lust, McCleerey, McPherson, Mills, Peterson (Kent), Peterson (Sue), Qualm, Rasmussen, Reed, Ring, Rounds, Rozum, Schaefer, Schoenfish, Smith, Tulson, Willadsen, Wismer, and Zikmund and Senators Ewing, Frerichs, Haverly, Klumb, Kolbeck, Monroe, Netherton, Otten (Ernie), Peters, Rusch, and Stalzer

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Promoting a resilient and healthy Black Hills forest
2 through endorsement of the forest management principles identified in "*Black Hills Resilient*
3 *Forest Strategy*" published December 2017.

4 WHEREAS, all South Dakota citizens benefit from resilient and healthy national, state, and
5 private forests; and

6 WHEREAS, all South Dakota citizens benefit from the ecological virtues and economic
7 gains derived from resilient and healthy forests: socioeconomic stability and development, forest
8 products generation, recreational diversity, tourism trade, hunting and angling opportunities,
9 grazing and foraging resource availability, wildlife habitat enhancement, water quality and
10 quantity improvement, quality of life enrichment, and general community well-being; and

11 WHEREAS, resilient and healthy forests reduce the probability of catastrophic wild fire
12 events, damaging insect epidemics and debilitating forest diseases; and



1 WHEREAS, increasingly dense forest tree conditions have led to wildfires of accelerating
2 expanse and volatility which threaten and often destroy homes, property and resources; and

3 WHEREAS, increasingly dense forest tree conditions have led to unsightly, destructive, and
4 costly pine beetle epidemics; and

5 WHEREAS, changing forest conditions have caused an increase in invasive plant
6 populations which threatens native species and reduces domestic and wildlife forage; and

7 WHEREAS, between 2012 and 2017, the recent pine beetle epidemic in the Black Hills
8 forest resulted in mitigation expenses totaling \$1.5 million by private landowners, \$5.52 million
9 by western South Dakota counties, \$13.9 million by the State of South Dakota, \$917,000 by
10 commercial forest product companies, \$5.5 million by the State of Wyoming, and a combined
11 \$77.25 million by multiple federal agencies; and

12 WHEREAS, in the absence of active forest management and a collaborative, wide-area
13 resilient forest strategy, the Black Hills of South Dakota will experience forest wildfires of
14 greater severity and pine beetle epidemics of greater significance; and

15 WHEREAS, to achieve a resilient and healthy Black Hills forest, a proactive and
16 cross-jurisdictional forest management strategy must be initiated, a strategy that includes both
17 private and public land owners, and that is adopted by government at all levels; and

18 WHEREAS, to maintain a resilient and healthy Black Hills forest, an effective forest
19 management strategy must include understory thinning practices, private and commercial timber
20 harvests, prescribed fire operations in conjunction with mechanical treatments or in areas not
21 suitable for timber harvest, and the continued involvement of the commercial forest product
22 trades; and

23 WHEREAS, to ensure a resilient and healthy Black Hills forest, South Dakota's natural
24 resource policies and forest management decisions should be predicated on a strategy developed

1 by professional and academic experts in their related scientific disciplines; and

2 WHEREAS, the Black Hills forest ecosystem crosses all land ownerships. The direct
3 responsibility of ensuring a resilient and healthy forest is shared among numerous stakeholders,
4 including: private land owners, federally-recognized Indian tribes, the United States Department
5 of Agriculture, the States of South Dakota and Wyoming, and the United States Department
6 of the Interior; and

7 WHEREAS, the "*Black Hills Resilient Forest Strategy*" was formulated through the
8 collaborative efforts of private citizens and landowners from both Wyoming and South Dakota,
9 forest commerce and business associations, academicians, natural resource and conservation
10 coalitions, and Wyoming, South Dakota, and federal government agencies, and was published
11 December 2017:

12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Ninety-
13 Third Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the State of
14 South Dakota regards and recognizes the critical role of active forest management in reducing
15 the threats to the Black Hills forest from wildfires, insects, and disease; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State of South Dakota encourages and fosters the
17 ecologies and economies of its forest communities of which a resilient and healthy forest is
18 critical; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in its efforts to increase the resilience and health of
20 the Black Hills forest, across all land ownerships, the State of South Dakota promotes and
21 endorses the "*Black Hills Resilient Forest Strategy*" as a statewide policy of efficacious forest
22 management.