

## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1003

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, to achieve a resilient and healthy Black Hills forest, a proactive and

cross-jurisdictional forest management strategy must be initiated, a strategy that includes both private and public land owners, and that is adopted by government at all levels; and

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

WHEREAS, to ensure a resilient and healthy Black Hills forest, South Dakota's natural resource policies and forest management decisions should be predicated on a strategy developed by professional and academic experts in their related scientific disciplines; and

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

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

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

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

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

Adopted by the House of Representatives,  
Concurred in by the Senate,

January 30, 2018  
February 1, 2018

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G. Mark Mickelson  
Speaker of the House

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Sandra J. Zinter  
Chief Clerk of the House

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Matt Michels  
President of the Senate

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Kay Johnson  
Secretary of the Senate