

Resolution 2024-_____

**A RESOLUTION FOR THE OKEFENOKEE
SWAMP AND ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION BY THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, HAMILTON
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

WHEREAS, Hamilton County takes pride in its rivers, including the Suwannee River to the east and south; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Hamilton County value the natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities afforded by the Okefenokee Swamp and the Suwannee River and their watersheds; and

WHEREAS, the Okefenokee Swamp is a unique natural, cultural, and economic treasure known worldwide, identified as an Aquatic Resource of National Importance by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a National Natural Landmark, a National Wilderness Area, and a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention; and

WHEREAS, the Okefenokee Swamp is the headwaters of the St Marys River and of the Suwannee River, famous worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the Suwannee River forms the eastern and southern boundaries of Hamilton County for more than eighty miles; and

WHEREAS, Hamilton County hosts several Suwannee River access points, demonstrating commitment to recreation on the Suwannee River through various initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the Hamilton County Commission has shown commitment to water quality and waterway recreation through the approval of the Comprehensive Plan, providing protections for the Suwannee River and its watersheds; and

WHEREAS, the citizens value the Okefenokee Swamp and the Suwannee River for water quality and habitat protection; and

WHEREAS, the environmental impact of strip mining in proximity to the Okefenokee Swamp raises significant concerns for the watershed; and

WHEREAS, thorough and unbiased review processes are crucial in assessing the potential environmental consequences of mining activities; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners:

1. Support the preservation and protection of the Okefenokee Swamp and its surrounding watersheds.

2. Advocate for a comprehensive, transparent, and impartial review of any proposed mining activities near the Okefenokee Swamp, including public hearings, public comments, and independent third-party review.

3. Encourage the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to thoroughly review and assess all mining permit applications to the same degree as a thorough U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Area-Wide Environmental Impact Statement, with public hearings, public comments, and independent third-party review.

4. Advocate for legislative measures in Georgia to prevent future strip mines near environmentally sensitive areas, including the Okefenokee Swamp and the blackwater rivers in the Suwannee River Basin.

5. Request the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to engage with the permitting process of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to ensure thorough consideration of environmental impacts.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, Hamilton County, Florida, this 20th day of February, 2024.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HAMILTON COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Attest:

Greg Godwin
Ex-officio Clerk

By _____
Chairman, Robert E. Brown
District 3

Member, Jimmy Murphy
District 1

Member, Robby Roberson
District 2

Member, Travis Erixton
District 4

Member, Richie McCoy
District 5

Approved as to Form By:

Andrew J. Decker, III
Hamilton County Attorney