

House Bill 562

By: Representatives Taylor of the 173rd, Stephens of the 164th, Sainz of the 180th, Greene of the 154th, Buckner of the 137th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 3 of Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to surface mining, so as to provide for a five-year moratorium on the
3 acceptance of applications for new permits and the acceptance of requests to modify existing
4 permits by the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources
5 to expand the area of land affected by surface mining operations on Trail Ridge; to provide
6 a definition; to provide exemptions; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws;
7 and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Part 3 of Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
11 relating to surface mining, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

12 "12-4-85.

13 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'Trail Ridge' means the elevated, geological
14 feature bounded on the west by the Okefenokee Swamp and its watershed; on the east by
15 an elevation of 100 feet above mean sea level; on the south by the triple divide of the
16 Soldiers Camp Island, Boone Creek, and Barbar Branch watersheds; and on the north by

17 the triple divide of the Upper Buffalo Creek, Big Creek, and Okefenokee Swamp
18 watersheds.

19 (b) Beginning on July 1, 2025, and continuing through June 30, 2030, the division shall
20 not accept any applications for new permits, nor shall the division accept any requests to
21 modify any existing permits for any surface mining operations on Trail Ridge that seek to
22 expand the area of affected land.

23 (c) This Code section shall not prohibit the acceptance or denial of any applications for
24 new permits or requests to modify any existing permits for any surface mining operations
25 on Trail Ridge submitted to and deemed complete by the division on or before June 30,
26 2025."

27 **SECTION 2.**

28 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.