

Water Supply and Meeting Demand

Georgia's Big Challenges

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- Fourteen Georgia river basins
- 108 of 159 Georgia counties lie in two or more river basins
- Twenty-eight counties have some portion of public water supply derived from IBTs

- Recurring legislative proposals to eliminate or severely restrict more IBTs in Georgia
- Typical anti-IBT “sound bytes”
 - “IBT water grabs by fast growing areas will deprive donor basins of their fair share of future growth and forever diminish their natural resources.”
 - “IBTs and new reservoirs add more water supply capacity in fast-growing areas that will cause too much growth and worsen congestion problems.”
- 2001 Georgia law creating 15-county Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District prohibits transfer of water into the District from other parts of the state. (When should this be revisited?)

- Georgia's 2008 State Water Plan includes 22 IBT "considerations" that "should be" evaluated by EPD director permit applications involving new or expanded IBTs.
- In early 2011, EPD director proposed that the DNR board adopt 22 IBT considerations directly from the State Water Plan as a new DNR rule. Done.
- Meanwhile, ALJ rules in a contested water withdrawal permit that IBT definition in the 2008 Water Plan supersedes prior IBT definition such that any use of water in another basin constitutes IBT, irrespective of returns to the basin of origin.

- November 2011 informal draft “Straw man” proposal not going forward.
- Questions arose regarding statutory authority, purpose, and need based on 2010 Water Stewardship Act and/or 2008 Water Plan.
- Look for another attempt and possible stakeholder engagement process later.

- November 2011 informal Draft “Straw man” proposal not going forward.
- Feedback concerning: complexity, exemptions, baselines, reduction levels, demand “hardening” ...
- Look for another attempt and possible stakeholder engagement process later this year.

- Based on water conservation recommendations from Governor's Water Contingency Task Force in 2009.
- Key provisions of the Act include water conservation enhancement measures by local governments, public water systems, and state agencies.
- August 31, 2011 report summarizes state agency implementation of the Act.

EPD Adopts New Regional Water Plans with Caveats



- November 15, 2011 memorandum by EPD director in form of FAQ responses regarding adoption of regional plans.
- EPD plans to use water quality/assimilative capacity models from the regional plans as the basis for wastewater discharge permitting.
- EPD does not plan to use the groundwater availability or surface water availability models as developed for the regional plans for water withdrawal permitting.
- Water withdrawal permitting will instead rely on traditional case-by-case considerations including continued use of the DNR 2001 Interim In-stream Flow Protection Strategy to set minimum in-stream flow requirements for surface water withdrawal permits.