



ALABAMA WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION

Robert Bentley
Governor

March 4, 2013

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Division Director
Alabama Office of Water
Resources

Mr. Bennett Bearden
Chairman
Alabama Water Agencies Working Group (AWAWG)
P. O. Box 20276
Tuscaloosa, AL 35402-0276

Dear Mr. Bearden,

The Alabama Water Resources Commission (AWRC) recently endorsed a document created by the Commission's Water Resources Management Subcommittee entitled "Alabama Water Resources Commission Water Management Vision and Principles Statement". The attached document presents a vision "that every individual and every agricultural, commercial, and industrial activities will have the water that is needed both now and in the future for beneficial purposes without impairing the natural living resources of the state or future quality of life in Alabama." The document then lists ten principles for management of the Alabama's resources in order to achieve this vision.

Again, the AWRC looks forward to working with the Alabama Water Agencies Working Group as an advocate for enhancing the state's management of water resources. To that end, we accept your invitation to attend the April meeting of the AWAWG and look forward to discussing this vision and principles statement.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Steeves, Chair
Alabama Water Resources Commission

Enclosure

Bill Bailey
Willard Bowers
Dennis Bragg
H. E. Cauthen, Jr.
Barbara Gibson
Randolph Hall
Billy V. Houston
John Joseph Howle
Laura A. Koon
James H. Lowery
Runette Mobley
Thomas R. Morgan
Arthur Orr
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Terry Waters
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Alabama Water Resources Commission

Water Management Vision and Principles Statement

Background

In the past, Alabamians have had water available for their use in sufficient quantities to drink, facilitate agriculture, commerce and transportation, help meet our energy needs and provide for recreation and wildlife habitat. However, the future availability of this resource is at risk without clear and comprehensive planning and management.

Vision

It is the vision of the Alabama Water Resources Commission that every individual and agricultural, commercial and industrial activities will have the water that is needed both now and in the future for beneficial purposes without impairing the natural living resources of the state or future quality of life in Alabama. The general welfare of the people of this state and sustained economic development is dependent upon the beneficial use of our water resources to their fullest extent. In order to achieve this vision, we should promote the following principles for management of all of Alabama's water resources:

Principles

1. There is a fundamental need to provide significant additional state funding for data collection, water assessments, and development and implementation of statutory mandates including statewide water management planning and education.
2. There needs to be a comprehensive education and outreach process to ensure that Alabama citizens have a better understanding of the importance of water resources management for the state.
3. Water should be managed in consideration of hydrologic boundaries while recognizing existing political boundaries and legal entities.
4. Water management policies should be based on sound science to the maximum degree possible.
5. Drought planning should be proactive and reflect local input and involvement on how any necessary water restrictions will be determined and imposed.
6. Surface and ground water should be managed in a closely coordinated fashion.
7. The management of water quantity and quality should be closely coordinated.
8. Water management decisions should be delegated to the lowest levels of government with appropriate state guidance on issues such as instream flow levels, interbasin transfer policies, regional infrastructure development incentives, etc.
9. Alabama should be sensitive to federal encroachment and take proactive measures to ensure state sovereignty in the management decisions on the state's water resources.
10. The process for water resources planning involves dynamic factors and any policies and plans should have a periodic review component.