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Environmental Policy and Information Center
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November 2012

Dear Commissioner McMillan, Commissioner Guy, Dr. Tew, Director Lefleur and Director Atkins:

**Re: Comments from Jacksonville State University for the
Alabama Water Agencies Working Group's issue paper entitled
Water Management Issues in Alabama**

On behalf of Jacksonville State University and through my 1999 White House appointments to serve as Alternate US Federal Commissioner of the ACT and ACF Water Compacts I am pleased to support your efforts and submit comments on the Alabama Water Agencies Working Group's (AWAWG) issue paper Water Management Issues in Alabama.

After discussing the goals and objectives of the issue paper with many of our natural resource professors and staff we have compiled several recommendations.

They are as follows:

1. If environmental flow standards are to be established as state policy, they must be based on the best scientific data available. We recommend selecting and convening an independent group of Alabama water and natural resource scientists to develop a scientific-based consensus document that will provide environmental flow standards recommendations and guidance for policy makers. This will enable the decision-makers to take the politics out of the establishment of environmental flow standards.
2. Any new watershed management policies need to have as a priority an established goal to minimize soil erosion, sedimentation and other forms of water pollution that negatively affects fisheries, wildlife and water quality.
3. Recognize that water management officials have an obligation to provide public access (enough water in the river) for fishing/anglers to not only the main river channels but also backwater access.

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4. Before any interbasin transfers are considered, the state must establish a “conservation first” policy and action plan. This policy will assist Alabama in its efforts to prevent interbasin transfer proposals considered by our neighboring states, Tennessee and Georgia.

5. We encourage the creation of a strong stakeholder and community participation process to assist in the development of a state water management plan.

In closing, thank you for giving us the opportunity to express our views. We grateful for your efforts and encourage the committee to use Jacksonville State as a resource which furthers our mission as a public institution of higher education.

With appreciation for your efforts, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Conroy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

W. Peter Conroy, Director

Cc: William A. Meehan, JSU President