

**From:** [Jim Stefkovich](#)  
**To:** [Atkins, Brian](#)  
**Subject:** Water Management Issues in Alabama Report  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 19, 2012 1:09:28 PM

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Brian,

Here are our comments to the report:

There are several recurring points throughout the report “Water Management Issues in Alabama” that we feel are vital to developing a water management plan for the State of Alabama.

**Point** –Alabama is blessed with abundant natural water resources, but with periodic occurrences of droughts and floods, increased demand for water due to population increases, industrial and agricultural development and use, shared interstate waterways, etc., it is vital that the state’s water resources be managed in such a way that they are best utilized, protected and preserved.

**Recommendation** – We strongly support the development of a statewide water management plan for Alabama. The plan should include input from local, state and federal groups, private industries and utilities, agricultural interests, public safety groups, recreational and environmental groups, etc., as well as the general public.

**Point** – To effectively develop a water management plan, there must be adequate data and resources available. Stream flow and rain gaging networks are a vital part of this data requirement, and should be supported by the state.

**Recommendation** – We support the state pursuing partnerships with federal agencies such as the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), local governments, private sector groups such as electrical utilities, industrial and agricultural interests, etc. to develop and maintain hydrologic data gathering networks. The data should be made available through a clearinghouse that is available to the governmental, private and public sectors. The state is encouraged to provide funding and support for groundwater and streamflow monitoring.

**Point** – The state’s water resources are finite, and as such, must be efficiently managed to protect and preserve them.

**Recommendation** – We support developing plans and procedures to manage water resources in Alabama. These should cover such things as monitoring and managing water withdrawals and inter-basin transfers, encouraging regional and local planning, public/private partnerships, etc. Additionally, concepts such as developing off-stream storage reservoirs for water supply during severe drought conditions, etc. should be explored.

**Point** – Both droughts and floods are recurring events that affect Alabama.

**Recommendation** – We support developing comprehensive drought and flood management plans. The state should develop procedures to provide accurate and timely information to the authors of the U.S. Drought Monitor to ensure that Alabama’s conditions and impacts are

correctly depicted.

One area that was not addressed in the report was dams and dam safety in Alabama. We recommend that a plan to over-see, monitor, and regulate dams in the state be developed as part of a statewide water management plan. Such a plan should include procedures for periodic dam safety inspections, and should be coordinated with other groups and agencies such as the USACE and Alabama Power Company.

**Point** – Many of Alabama’s streams and waterways are shared with other states. This can lead to disagreements and conflicts over the shared use of these waterways.

**Recommendation** – We support developing procedures and policies to ensure that Alabama receives its equitable share of both surface and groundwater that is jointly shared with surrounding states. Relationships should be developed and maintained with peers in neighboring states to coordinate activities relating to shared watersheds and maintain lines of communication if issues arise between the states.