

Potential Issues for Water Allocation Study

3 December 2007

Section 1.(a) of S.L. 2007-518 (H.B. 820) requires the Environmental Review Commission (ERC), with the assistance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), to conduct a comprehensive study of water resources in North Carolina. There are no particular proposals for change at this point, but the ERC is interested in your views on issues to be addressed in the study and possible legislative changes to be made. In addition to inviting your comments about water resources and water allocation in general, the following are some questions on which the ERC would like input:

Water Supply and Allocation Policy Generally

- Is the State making full and efficient use of its water supply? Should more be done with the reclaiming and reuse of water? Are there other ways in which supply could be created or demand reduced?
- What role should the State play, if any, in future water allocation decisions?
- How aggressive should the State be in requiring or incentivizing water suppliers to connect to each other so that water can be shared in times of shortages?
- Is additional information needed to guide public and private water use decisions?
- Does the price of drinking water, stormwater and wastewater services in your area adequately cover the costs of providing those services? Should it cover those costs? Should the State play a larger role in encouraging public and private utilities to set adequate rate structures? Conservation rate structures?
- The legislature has created the State Water Infrastructure Commission (SWIC) to study and make recommendations on the state's water and wastewater infrastructure needs. What should SWIC focus on?

Allocation of Limited Supplies

- In areas of the State where water supplies are limited or declining, how should the State allocate water among users?
- Is the capacity use area program a good model to use to allocate water in other regions of the State when water supplies become limited?

Local and State Water Supply Planning

- Should all users of water over a certain threshold (such as 25,000 gallons per day) be required to register their use with the State? Should all major users be required to report their use to the Division of Water Resources in DENR more frequently, such as monthly? Required to post on a web site?
- Are the local water supply plans useful in helping understand where water resource problems are likely to occur? Is the State water supply plan useful? How could the planning process be improved?
- Would a statewide study of water efficiency opportunities be useful?
- Would a statewide study of regional water, wastewater and stormwater opportunities be useful?

Drought Response

- How well has State government responded to the current drought? Local governments? Citizens? Industrial users? Commercial users? Agriculture?
- Should State and/or local government have greater power to limit the use of water, including private wells in times of water shortage? If so, what should that power be?

Interbasin Transfers

- How difficult should it be to get permission to move water from one river basin to another? What should the process be?