



FULTON COUNTY TAXPAYERS FOUNDATION

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SPECIAL EDITION

Georgia Political Leaders Must Give The Water Crisis Their Number One Priority

“For the first time in more than 100 years, much of the Southeast has reached the most severe category of drought, creating an emergency so serious that some cities are just months away from running out of water.”

The New York Times, 10/16/07

Five years ago the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District commissioned the highly-reputable professional engineering firm, Jordan Jones & Goulding (JJ&G), to research and prepare a “Water Supply & Water Conservation Management Plan.” In September 2003 – over four years ago – the final plan, 256-pages, was submitted, reviewed, and adopted by the District Board of Directors of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. The Plan confirmed that “future withdrawals will exceed the safe yield from the Chattahoochee River/Lake Lanier watershed system” and “water demands within the District as a whole could exceed District water resources without concerted and coordinated efforts by District water users to conserve water and develop new sources.”

In spite of the fact that the Water District has made a number of accomplishments since the plan was adopted, there is still no statewide comprehensive plan with deadlines, measurable benchmarks, and meaningful consequences for failing to reduce significant waste of water.

Five Strategies Proposed By JJ&G To Increase The Water Supply and Conserve Water:

1. **“Reallocation of Lake Lanier & Lake Allatoona for water supply.”**
2. **“Intensification of Water Conservation efforts.”** There is no uniform State-wide Water Conservation Program, enforced by the State.
3. **“Construction of at least five planned new reservoirs.”** According to the records, of the five proposed reservoirs, none are in operation. Hickory Log Creek Reservoir (Cobb County) and Tussahaw Reservoir (Henry County) are under construction, while Lake McIntosh Reservoir (Fayette County) and Hard Labor Creek Reservoir (Walton County) have been permitted, but not constructed. Cedar Creek Reservoir in Hall County has been completed, but is not yet in operation. Other reservoirs, if they

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prove feasible and can be permitted, should be viewed as consistent with the Water Supply Plan. Examples of such potential reservoirs include the South Fulton Reservoir on Bear Creek and Glades Reservoir in Hall County.

4. **“Sharing of water resources within the District to meet local demand.”**
5. **“Reclamation of water by indirect potable reuse through Lake Lanier.”**

Currently, the permitted District water supply is approximately 933 million gallons per day on an annual average basis. With the Water Conservation Program detailed by Jordan Jones & Goulding, projected to 2030, demand is reduced by only 11%. Hence the need for more *reservoirs, reallocation of the current water supply, sharing of water resources and reclamation of water by indirect potable reuse.*

Water Conservation Program

The professional engineers’ plan describes the recommended water conservation program for the District:

- Establish conservation pricing by all District utilities. This is not being uniformly enforced.
- Enact legislation to require plumbing retrofits on home re-sales. This was proposed in the 2007 General Assembly, but, sadly, *did not pass.*
- Enact legislation to require low-flush urinals for new industrial, commercial and institutional buildings. This, too, was proposed in the 2007 General Assembly, but, sadly, *did not pass.*
- Enact legislation to require rain sensor shut-off switches on new irrigation systems. Here, again, this was proposed in the 2007 General Assembly, but, sadly, *did not pass.*
- Enact legislation to require sub-unit meters in new multi-family buildings.
- Assess and reduce water system leakage.
- Conduct commercial and residential water audits.
- Distribute low-flow retrofit kits to residential users.
- Implement education and public awareness plan.
- Establish review and oversight of water conservation implementation and performance.

Water Supply Facilities

Jordan Jones & Goulding presented the highlights of their Facilities Plan:

- Support reallocation of Lake Lanier & Lake Allatoona for water supply, applying immediately for Injunctive Relief. Sadly, this was only addressed very recently on October 22nd by Governor Purdue.
- Support priority for operational usage of at least five new water reservoirs.
- Construct two new system connections and maintain one existing system connection to allow water resource sharing.
- Construct a new water treatment plant in Walton County.
- Expand 25 existing water treatment plants.
- Retire 4 existing water treatment plants.
- Return reclaimed water to Lake Lanier by Forsyth, Gwinnett and Hall Counties for future indirect potable reuse.

Governance Recommendations

Jordan Jones & Goulding presents the following governance recommendations that will assist District jurisdictions in active collaboration.

- Model inter-jurisdictional agreements.
- Fair share funding formula.
- Level of services assurances.
- Formal system of dispute resolution.
- Increased state role.
- Publicity and rewards for successful partnerships.

The state political leaders should consider a statewide comprehensive implementation of the “Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan”. The Governor (with the approval of the State Leadership)

must appoint a top-notch Water “Czar” with authority and funding to enforce the implementation of the “Water Supply & Water Conservation Plan.” Such a Water “Czar” must call an on-going series of meetings with the State Officials, Mayors and County Commissioners as well as the Business Community Leaders, Property Owners, and Citizens to seek the full cooperation of all parties.

Water Drought Impacts New Construction

In this regard, all cities will have to comply with any statewide legislation regarding water supply and conservation, i.e., more than 13,000 new condominium units are planned for Atlanta in the next three years alone, in addition to the 5,600 already under construction and on top of the 28,255 that have been built in the last 10 years Downtown, Midtown and Buckhead. Facing the worst drought in over a 100 years, there may be a need for a statewide moratorium on new construction until such time as there is an assurance of adequate water for the occupants.

Funding The Water Supply Plan

According to the professional engineers, the estimated cost of the proposed capital improvements as well as the other costs included in the Water Supply Plan are in the range of \$26 billion. Although this cost was planned to be spread over 30 years, the water emergency demands immediate action. The costs will largely be borne by the users of water supply services within the District.

Updating The “Water Supply & Water Conservation Management Plan”

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District is to be commended for commissioning one of the country’s leading professional engineering firms, Metcalf & Eddy, to update the Jordan Jones & Goulding Plan dated September 2003. In view of the drought emergency, this update should be given the highest priority, with recommendations in time for the January convening of the 2008 General Assembly. Other States, such as California and Nevada update their Water Resource Plan annually. In view of the drought emergency, the State of Georgia should update its Plan annually.

Call To Action

Facing the worst water crisis in over 100 years will require the immediate implementation of the systemic plan outlined by Jordan Jones & Goulding. Time is truly of the essence. The state political leadership should consider without delay a statewide comprehensive approach to implement the “Water Supply and Water Conservation Plan.” Governor Perdue (with the approval of the State Leadership) should appoint a top-notch Water “Czar” with authority and funding to enforce the implementation of the “Water Supply & Water Conservation Plan.”

Members of the FCTF – their friends and neighbors – are urged to email the State Leadership, exhorting the passage of a statewide approach to the “Water Supply and Water Conservation Plan”, and, at the same time, requesting the Governor to appoint a Water “Czar.”

Governor Sonny Perdue (www.gov.state.ga.us<<http://www.gov.state.ga.us/>>)

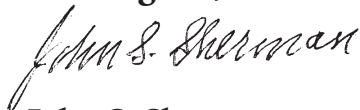
Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle (Casey.Cagle@ltgov.ga.gov)

Senate President Eric Johnson (eric.johnson@senate.ga.gov)

House Speaker Glenn Richardson (glenn.richardson@house.ga.gov)

The water emergency demands the highest priority!

Kind regards,



John S. Sherman
President

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