

May 13, 2015

By email: EPDComments@dnr.state.ga.us

Mr. James A. Capp
Watershed Protection Branch
Georgia Environmental Protection Division
Watershed Protection Branch
2 Martin Luther King Jr., Drive
Atlanta GA 30334

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
RESOURCES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION RELATING TO OUTDOOR
WATER USE, CHAPTER 391-3-30**

Dear Mr Capp

The Georgia Water Alliance (Alliance) supports this drought management rulemaking process and is pleased to provide comments on the proposed drought rules that the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has released for public comment.

The Alliance is a broad coalition of stakeholders representing business and industry, local government, water service providers, utilities and agribusiness interests. See [Attachment 1](#).

Formed in 2006, the Alliance provided a unified voice during the development and implementation of Georgia's Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan. The Alliance fully supports the legislature's water policy statement that "*Georgia manages water resources in a sustainable manner to support the state's economy, to protect public health and natural systems, and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens.*"

The Alliance commends EPD for undertaking this drought rulemaking process during a period when most of the state is experiencing relatively normal seasonal conditions. This is far more favorable than trying to undertake such a review when water users and communities are having to deal with the harsh realities of drought and the associated emotional and management stresses.

The Alliance thanks EPD for seeking early discussion and input from targeted organizations potentially impacted by this proposed rule and for its consideration of the numerous issues that were raised during the initial stakeholder discussions and, subsequently, during the development of this proposed rule.

While this proposed rule is not perfect, progress has been made since early drafts were published. The Alliance members specifically wish to provide the following comments:

- i. **391-3-30-.04 Drought Indicators and Triggers** - each indicator and trigger should be based on sound science and supported by verifiable data that reflect actual circumstances in each region.
- ii. **391-3-30-.06 Drought Response Committee** – membership of this Committee should include representation from: municipal water suppliers; self-supplied industries; energy utilities; and the many industrial/commercial and urban agriculture sectors served by local water providers.

iii. **391-3-30-.07 Drought Response Strategies:**

(4) Drought Response Level 3 (b) Specific Categories of Outdoor Water Use. The Alliance does not support the proposed structure of Drought Response Level 3 (b). It is the Alliance's view that Level 3 requirements should fully reflect the thirteen (13) conditions stipulated in the *Water Stewardship Act*.

(4) Drought Response Level 3 (d) Rate Structures. Alliance members do not support EPD's involvement in the setting of water rate structures imposed by individual water utilities.

It is the Alliance's strong view that each utility is best positioned to be able to manage its own business affairs, fully cognizant of its day-to-day responsibilities to manage its financial, operational and permitting obligations without any involvement of EPD or other state officials.

(5) Drought Response Strategies Menu – the Alliance believes that this rule will only be as good as the commitment from individuals to understand and embrace the initiatives outlined within it.

Alliance members offer to work with EPD to develop a user friendly education program and implementation guidelines that will take these rules and apply them to real life business and community circumstances.

To give these rules on-the-ground meaning will build momentum for better understanding of the need for and adoption of all elements outlined in these rules. If these actions occur continuously during periods of non-drought, we will better prepare businesses, industries and communities to accept the realities of drought circumstances whenever they apply.

iv. **391-3-30-.08 Variance Requests** – The Alliance supports utilities with off-stream storage capacity available for use during a drought being able to fully utilize this capacity without application of further use restrictions or requirement to undertake any additional water supply and demand analysis or other quantitative analysis.

Sincerely,



The following organizations support this submission:

American Council of Engineering Companies of Georgia

Associated General Contractors of Georgia, Inc.

City of Austell

Georgia Agribusiness Council

Georgia Chamber

Georgia Club Owners Association

Georgia Farm Bureau

Georgia Green Industry Association

Georgia Mining Association

Georgia Paper & Forest Products Association

Georgia Urban Ag Council

Metro Atlanta Chamber

Regional Business Coalition

Association County Commissioners of Georgia

Association of Pool and Spa Professionals

Dalton Utilities

Georgia Association of Manufacturers

Georgia Club Managers Association

Georgia EMC

Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association

Georgia Industry Environmental Coalition

Georgia Municipal Association

Georgia State Golf Association

Macon Water Authority

Oglethorpe Power Corporation

Please direct inquiries about the Georgia Water Alliance to:

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Attachment 1 - The Georgia Water Alliance

The Georgia Water Alliance (Alliance) is a coalition of business, local government, utility, agricultural and water system manager interests. The Alliance was founded to provide a collaborative forum for these statewide entities to build consensus and to provide focused input into the development and implementation of the Statewide Water Management Plan and other important water resource management policy and program activities.

The Alliance's membership represents all facets of water use, re-use, planning and management.

Without exception, the Alliance is the most authoritative voice in Georgia with a membership reach that represents: Counties and local governments, energy and water utilities, metropolitan and rural businesses and communities and all industry sectors.

Membership of the Alliance is continually expanding. In May 2015 Alliance membership included the following organizations:

*American Council of Engineering Companies of Georgia
Georgia Club Managers Association
Georgia Club Owners Association
Association County Commissioners of Georgia
Associated General Contractors of Georgia, Inc.
Association of Pool and Spa Professionals
City of Austell
Columbus Water Works
Council for Quality Growth
Dalton Utilities
Georgia Agribusiness Council
Georgia Association of Manufacturers
Georgia Association of Realtors
Georgia Association of Water Professionals
Georgia Beverage Association
Georgia Chamber
Georgia Chemistry Council
Georgia EMCs*

*Georgia Farm Bureau
Georgia Forestry Association
Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association
Georgia Green Industry Association
Georgia Industry Association
Georgia Industry Environmental Coalition
Georgia Mining Association
Georgia Municipal Association
Georgia Paper & Forest Products Association
Georgia Poultry Federation
Georgia Power
Georgia State Golf Association
Georgia Urban Ag Council
Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association
Macon Water Authority
Metro Atlanta Chamber
Oglethorpe Power Corporation
Regional Business Coalition*