

Permit holders in the Level 4 Counties reduced water use in February 2008 as compared to the previous winter (December 2006 through March 2007).

Background

On October 23, 2007, Governor Perdue directed the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to modify surface and ground water withdrawal/production permits to achieve a 10 percent reduction in usage for permit holders in the 61 North Georgia Counties covered under the Level 4 drought designation. Beginning November 1, 2007, permit holders were required to reduce water production and non-municipal/non-agricultural water withdrawal by 10 percent compared to usage of the last winter season (beginning of December 2006 through end of March 2007).

Affected Georgians

These requirements are currently in effect on 759 permit holders. 81 of these permit holders produce more than 1 million gallons per day each for a total of 97% of the water produced in the Level 4 Counties. The remaining permit holders produce less than 1 million gallons per day each for a total of 3% of the water produced.

As we did in November, December, and January, our review of February data has focused on those systems greater than 1 million gallons per day in accordance with our Enforcement Strategy. The February review includes 81 permit holders that produce more than 1 million gallons per day.

Critical Infrastructure Considerations

Opportunities to reduce water consumption by power producing utilities are related to the demand for electricity. Consequently, water conservation by electric producing utility plants is constrained by the need to support energy demands. These can be reduced to the extent that Georgians work to reduce energy. Additionally, the power grid is designed to have certain plants operating almost continuously to provide the base load for electrical needs. The 7 power producing utility plants are considered separately from the data described below.

Reduction Goal Exceeded

The goal for these 81 permit holders producing more than one million gallons per day (public water systems and industries, not including power generation) was to reduce by 69 million gallons per day for a 10% reduction. The actual reduction achieved was 89 million gallons per day for a 13.2% reduction.

Data Received

For large systems (those greater than 1 million gallons per day), all systems reported February usage and all systems responded to the Request for Additional Information.

Based on the Additional Information submitted by permit holders, EPD continued to make some adjustments to the previous winter baseline to reflect buying and selling water between systems and for some industrial permittees to adjust for manufacturing cycles.

Compliance Status Summary

While more than half of the 80 permit holders producing more than 1 million gallons per day succeeded in meeting or exceeding the 10% reduction, some systems faced greater challenges:

Successes

52 met in February

- 18 met in January and use decreased in February
- 15 did not meet in January but met in February
- 19 met in January but use increased February

Challenges

29 did not meet in February

- 16 did not meet in January but use decreased
- 4 met in January but did not meet in February
- 3 did not meet in January and their use increased in February
- 6 used more than last year