

Permit holders in the Level 4 Counties reduced water use in March 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 840 permit holders. 89 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, January and February, our review of March data has focused on those systems greater than 1 million gallons per day in accordance with our Enforcement Strategy. The March review includes 82 permit holders that produce more than 1 million gallons per day, excluding 7 electrical power generating plants as explained below.

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.

Even though the 7 power producing utility plants are considered separately from the data described below, it should be noted that maintenance and design and operation changes at Plants McDonough, Hammond and Wansley resulted in significant reductions in water use for March.

Reduction Goal Exceeded

The goal for these 82 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 96 million gallons per day for a 13.8% reduction.

Data Received

For large systems (those greater than 1 million gallons per day), all systems reported March 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 82 permit holders producing more than 1 million gallons per day succeeded in meeting or exceeding the 10% reduction, some systems faced greater challenges:

Successes

53 met in March

- 31 met in February and use decreased in March
- 5 did not meet in February but met in March
- 11 met in February but use increased in March
- 6 met in February and March and usage did not change

Challenges

29 did not meet in March

- 8 did not meet in February or March but use decreased
- 3 met in February but did not meet in March
- 7 did not meet in February or March and their use increased in March
- 5 did not meet in February or March and usage did not change
- 6 used more than last year

Enforcement Strategy

EPD will be sending letters to all permittees requesting additional information regarding their water usage. Permittees whose March usage exceeded the average of their December 2006 through March 2007 usage will receive a notice of violation.