

## **Permit holders in the Level 4 counties reduced water use in April 2008 by 31% when compared to April 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 840 permit holders in the 61 North Georgia Counties covered under the Level 4 drought designation. Beginning November 1, 2007, these 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). This requirement expired March 31, 2008 and was not extended because EPD determined that during the spring and summer months the Level 4 outdoor water use restrictions would result in water use reductions exceeding 10%.

### **Assessment of Compliance with 10% Reduction Requirement**

In order to assess compliance with the 10% reduction requirement, all permit holders in the Level 4 counties were required to report their water usage to EPD on a monthly basis. 89 of these 840 permit holders in the area under the Level 4 drought designation reported water usage of 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. Therefore, in November through March, EPD's review of reported water use data focused on those systems that used more than 1 million gallons per day.

### **Continued Monitoring of Water Use**

Although the 10% reduction requirement is no longer in effect, EPD is continuing to monitor water usage to assess the effectiveness of the Level IV outdoor water use restrictions and other conservation efforts. Therefore, EPD is requiring 205 permittees in the current 55-county Level IV drought area that use more than 100,000 gallons per day to continue reporting their water use on a monthly basis. Overall, these permittees account for 98% of all water use in the 55-county Level IV drought area, almost exclusively from surface water.

### **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 demand. 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.

### **April 2007 versus April 2008 Water Use Reductions**

Although the requirement to reduce water use by 10% is no longer in effect, April 2008 water use by permittees using more than 100,000 gallons per day that reported in April decreased by 31% or 148 million gallons per day when compared to April 2007. Of the 189 permittees using more than 100,000 gallons per day that reported for April, 155 decreased their water use when compared to April 2007 while only 34 reported an increase. 16 permittees failed to report.

This significant reduction in water use is attributable to the outstanding conservation efforts by Georgia's citizens and the continuation of Level IV outdoor watering restrictions.