

**Stakeholder Recommendations
for Regulatory and Statutory Reform
Final as of November 14, 2005**

1. In order to minimize or eliminate speculative farm-use permit applications, EPD should charge a permit application fee of \$250. This money should be dedicated to assisting management of agricultural water use or as an incentive for conservation, and should not be put into the State general fund.

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #1, and the motion passed unanimously.]

2. For existing permits, those that are ‘grandfathered’ as defined by the Water Quality Act and Groundwater Use Act should be exempt from being modified in any way in order to provide new users with sufficient water.

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #2, and the motion passed with one vote in opposition.]

3. For declared drought years, the Flint River Drought Protection Act should be modified to allow focus on individual sub-basins, including areas with critical habitats that are host to endangered species:
 - a. Upper Flint
 - b. Middle Flint
 - c. Kinchafoonee-Muckalee Creek
 - d. Lower Flint
 - e. Ichawaynochaway Creek
 - f. Spring Creek

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #3, and the motion passed unanimously.]

4. Funding for the Flint River Drought Protection Act should be expanded and assured beyond its current limits such that it can afford to pay higher per-acre prices for suspension of irrigation. This would allow the State to suspend irrigation on high-water use lands as opposed to on marginal farmland; increase the likelihood of taking more land out of irrigation; allow the EPD Director to require non-voluntary suspension of irrigation with fewer challenges; and offset the direct and indirect costs of reducing irrigation.

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #5, and the motion passed unanimously.]

[Nov 14 meeting – the motion was made and seconded to make the above addition in red, and the motion passed with one opposing vote.]

5. Future permitting decisions, policing, review, etc. should be made at a local level, such as by a regional water management district or authority similar to those operating in other states.

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #5, and the motion passed with one abstention.]

6. The state should consider subsidies for conversion of permits from surface water to groundwater, as this may be a cost effective way to maintain adequate stream flows in some areas.

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #6, and the motion passed unanimously.]

7. The state should consider using existing wells or installing and operating wells during extreme droughts to supplement the flow in Spring Creek and other tributaries to maintain stream flow and protect endangered species.

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #7, and the motion passed with one abstention and one vote in opposition.]

8. The statutory requirement that EPD “shall” issue all new permits should be re-evaluated in order to protect existing users and the resource.

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #8, and the motion passed with one vote in opposition.]

9. Alternatives to issuing permits based on rated pump capacity should be explored.

[A motion was made and seconded to accept #9, and the motion passed unanimously.]

10. Ground water users should be included in the FRDPA, at the same payment rates as surface water users, where the best available science indicates that they would directly impact stream flows. (11.14.05 meeting addition)

[A motion was made and seconded to reconsider and add recommendation #10 as written above in red, and the motions passed unanimously.]