

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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Noel Holcomb, Commissioner

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Environmental Protection Division

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Dear Water Council Member:

The Georgia General Assembly charged the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) with developing a draft comprehensive state-wide water plan and presenting it to the Water Council no later than July 1, 2007. On behalf of EPD, I am pleased to submit to the Council a draft of Georgia's inaugural comprehensive state-wide water management plan: *Georgia's Water Resources: A Blueprint for the Future*.

Very early in the process of preparing this draft plan, EPD and the Water Council recognized that Georgia's diverse economy and environment would require flexibility and adaptability in our management of water resources. Therefore, this document serves as a blueprint to improve decisions about water management, to plan for water resource quality and quantity on the regional level, and to provide flexibility for best meeting water quality and quantity goals suited to a given region of the state.

In drafting the plan, EPD benefited from the counsel and input of literally hundreds of individuals representing agricultural and business interests, local governments, non-profit agencies, trade associations and others. Technical Advisory Committees, Basin Advisory Committees, and the State Advisory Committee convened numerous times over the past year, and the Water Council conducted twenty-two town hall meetings in communities throughout Georgia. I am grateful for the thoughtful and constructive input received from all sectors of water use and all regions of Georgia.

This draft plan clearly shows that there is much work to be done to meet the overall vision for Georgia's water management as directed by the General Assembly: *"to manage 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."* With the support of the Water Council, and in turn, the General Assembly, we can achieve this shared vision for Georgia's water resources, put *Georgia's Water Resources: A Blueprint for the Future* into action, and ensure that future generations of Georgians have the quality and quantity of water resources necessary to sustain prosperity in our great state.

Thank you for your hard work and guidance throughout this process. I look forward to working with you as we prepare to finalize and approve a comprehensive state-wide plan for the General Assembly's consideration in the 2008 session.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Couch
Director