

## **Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

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### **Most North Georgians Meet Water Conservation Goal In December**

Most citizens and industries in drought-stricken north Georgia met or exceeded Governor Sonny Perdue's requirement to reduce water use by 10 percent in December, according to water use data announced today by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). It was the second month in a row that water use dropped as compared to winter use a year ago.

Overall, water use data submitted by 80 water withdrawal and drinking water permit holders showed a savings of 103 million gallons per day for a 13.3 percent reduction. The Governor's water use reduction order applied to all water-related permit holders in the 61-county drought region, but the 80 large water systems account for most of the water use by citizens and industries.

"The December water use figures are a shining example of water conservation at work," said EPD Director Carol A. Couch. "Georgians should be very proud of the extra effort being made to insure we have a sufficient supply of drinking water in the coming months."

EPD's review of the December data included the following changes to better represent water conservation efforts by citizens and industries:

- Facilities that return approximately 100 percent of the water to the source will no longer be subject to the reduction requirement since there is no environmental benefit.
- Water systems that only sell water wholesale will no longer be subject to the requirement, because use of the water they provide is included in their customers' reports.
- Georgia Power plants are no longer included in the water use calculations because they are considered critical infrastructure. Water use depends on energy demands and the operation of the power grid to meet electrical needs. Georgians are being asked to conserve water by also conserving energy.

All large permit holders in the drought region filed the required December water use reports with EPD. Three of the 80 large water systems showed an increase in water use during December as compared to last winter's average, and will be sent notices of violation. They are Carroll County, Walton County Water & Sewer Authority and Chickamauga.

Permit holders who achieved between zero and 10 percent reduction, will receive requests for additional information. Continued failure to reduce water use may result in monetary penalties and other requirements for water conservation measures.

While passing storms have brought some relief to the drought region this winter, continued water conservation is important as the forecast calls for moderate, mostly dry weather heading into spring.

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