

**SYNOPSIS OF
THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE RULES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION
RELATING TO GROUNDWATER USE, CHAPTER 391-3-2**

Rule 391-3-2 Groundwater Use is being amended by adding new section 391-3-2-.16, Permitting based on Regional Water Development and Conservation Plans

Purpose: To provide minimum uniform statewide regulations for the issuance of any permit for the use of water, based on Regional Water Development and Conservation Plans. Regional Water Development and Conservation Plans shall promote the sustainable use of Georgia's waters through the selection of an array of management practices, to support the State's economy, to protect public health and natural systems, and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens.

Main Features: As provided in the Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan, the characteristics of water resources and water users vary significantly in differing regions across Georgia. Protecting the ability of the state's water resources to meet needs for water supply and assimilation of wastewater will require regional, resource-based plans that identify the management practices appropriate to the resources and users in each region.

All terms used in this Rule shall be interpreted in accordance with the definitions listed in the Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan.

The Director shall use adopted Water Development and Conservation Plans to guide decisions regarding permitting. Plans will also guide state grants and loans from the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority for water-related projects within that water planning region.

STATEMENT OF RATIONALE
Rules for Groundwater use

391-3-2-.16, Permitting based on Regional Water Development and Conservation Plans

The basis for this rule is to provide a mechanism to protect the state's water resources by basing permitting decisions on regionally prepared water development and conservation plans. The water development and conservation plans will be developed on a regional basis accounting for the differing characteristics of water resources in each region. Water supply will be assessed by aquifer(s) within 10 water planning regions established by the Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan. Regional, resource-based plans will identify management practices appropriate to the resources and users in each region.

Once adopted, the Director will use the Water Development and Conservation Plans to guide decisions regarding permitting. Plans will also guide state grants and loans from the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority for water-related projects.

This revision is not expected to result in significant additional costs to the Department of Natural Resources or to the regulated community. No costs will be imposed on local governments or the general public.