

MINUTES
GEORGIA COALITION FOR SOUND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
September 21, 2000
2pm - 4:30 PM
Offices of Troutman Sanders
600 Peachtree Street 52nd Floor
ATLANTA, GA

At 2:15 PM the Chairman, Mike Vaquer called the meeting to order.

The Anti-Trust Admonition was given by legal counsel, Margaret Campbell.

Presenters included Representatives Bob Hanner and Tom McCall, Joe Young of the Governor's Office, Allan Hallum of the EPD's Water Protection Branch, Jeff Rader with the Regional Business Coalition, Chris DeVinney with ACCG, Tom Gehl representing GMA, Jean McRae of GCSEP and Harvey Rosenzweig of Troutman Sanders. Highlights of each presentation follow:

ACCG/GMA Water Policies

ACCG – Chris DeVinney

- In surveys and discussions the most important issue to their members is water.
- Need to begin working together on a watershed basis.
- TMDLs could have big impact.
- Solving non-point source pollution will go long way towards meeting TMDLs.

GMA – Tom Gehl

- Adopting a policy statement soon.
- Conservation to be important part of drought management plan.
- GMA in favor of EPD staffing request but no position on fee increases to get there.

State-wide Water Issues Statement

Mike Vaquer/Harvey Rosenzweig

- **Document is attached.**
- Good explanation of all of the current water issues the subcommittee identified with the exception of navigation on the ACF.

Environmental Water Bill of Rights

Jean McRae

- Sounds good but policies they want to implement are same old wish list.
- **Citizen sampling, citizen lawsuits are included.**

Clean Water Initiative

Jeff Rader, Regional Business Coalition

- Local governments strongly opposed to basin-wide strategies.
- New state agency not favored by most of the group.
- Consensus proposal should be presented to group for approval Oct.4.
- Two of the three proposals being considered include water supply within the parameters of the agency that is set up.
- Business and environmental representatives want legislative solution. Concern with Memorandum of Agreements proposed by cities is amount of time they take and lack of potential buy-in.

TMDLs and Water Quality Issues

Allan Hallum, Chief, Water Protection Branch, GA EPD

TMDLs

- Number of impaired waters is increasing as number of basins studied increases.
- 2/3 of way through project. 1100 streams currently listed as impaired.
- Everything now happening being driven by TMDLs.
- Mercury standards need to be based on risk-based assessment. One problem is new standard of 1 part per trillion. Rain has mercury level of 12 parts per trillion. Another problem is bioavailability of mercury. Current standard counts all of the mercury even if it is bioavailable to humans.
- Nutrient levels for streams are next. This will affect land use decisions.
- **Wet testing of streams is likely next step.**

NPDS Permits

- Basin wide permitting approach to be used.
- **All current permits to be opened up and reissued in 303d listed streams.**
- **More stringent conditions to be put in those permits.**
- Animal feeding operations will be brought into permitting process.
- Stormwater permits will change the way land disturbing processes are done, including forestry and agriculture.
- Third party suits are likely as state goes through the process.

Administration Water Legislation

Joe Young, Governor's Legislative Director

- Divide water issues into three geographic areas.
 - North GA – consumption: human 80%, agric./industry 20%. Very little aquifer to draw from. Atlanta is largest metro area in country on smallest water supply.
 - Southwest GA – consumption: human 20%, agric. /industry 80%. Tremendous aquifer base.
 - Southeast GA – consumption: human 20%, agric./industry 80%. Large aquifer base and surface water base.
 - Issue in N.GA is capital to reduce consumption and increase supply.
 - Issue in S.GA is management of the resource.
- **There will be a bill this year.**
- **State wide agency (WETTA) not seen as answer.**
- **Legislation should encourage development of comprehensive local water authorities that handle supply, treatment and runoff of stormwater. All three should be linked in cost. Water use rates must reflect cost of supplying and disposing of the water.**
- Water supply aspect of Atlanta's problem must be dealt with.
- **State operated reservoirs dedicated strictly to water supply (not hydropower or recreation) should be part of the solution.**
- Local governments that create comprehensive water authorities should have ability to tap into state owned reservoirs.
- **Reservoirs must have management of basin above them to ensure clean source.**

- Bill should be heavy on incentives, light on the big stick. Federal TMDLs and other regs are stick enough.

Legislative Issues

Representative Bob Hanner, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee

Representative Tom McCall, Chairman, House Water Quality Subcommittee

- Any legislation must be common sense.
- Opposed to water management authorities similar to those in Florida.
- Have not seen any specific legislation yet.

NOx Update

Margaret Campbell reported that Georgia had requested to vacate Georgia's challenge to the EPA budgets since these are to be reissued as part of the upcoming rulemaking by EPA. This does not compromise GCSEP's capability to pursue this issue further should the need arise

Nominating Committee Report/Notice of Change in Bylaws

Graham Holden, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, reported that existing officers have agreed to continue to serve. In order to accomplish this, a change in the by-laws is necessary that would delete language in Article 6 "OFFICERS". Specifically, Article 6.1 Enumeration, Election and Term would have to be changed so that language limiting the Chairman to two one year terms would be deleted. The new language would read as follows:"Officers may succeed themselves in office by action of the Board of Directors." This change will be noticed to the members in compliance with the notification requirements of the by-laws to enable enactment of the changes at the next meeting following expiration of the notification requirement.

This shall serve as notice to amend the bylaws not more than 30 days from transmission of these minutes upon approval of the membership. Bylaws can be made available by requesting them from Margaret Campbell or Jean McRae.