

# **Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

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## **Georgia EPD To Suspend Consideration of Some New Farm Water Permit Applications**

The Director of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has announced that consideration of new applications for agricultural water withdrawal permits in a 24-county area of southwest Georgia will be suspended. The suspension takes effect immediately, but does not apply to applications EPD has already received as of this date.

The suspension affects both agricultural groundwater and surface water withdrawals in the lower Flint and Chattahoochee River basins in a region known as Subarea 4, which includes all or part of the following 17 counties: Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Crisp, Decatur, Dooly, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Sumter, Terrell, Turner and Worth. In addition, agricultural surface water withdrawal applications for parts of Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Early, Marion, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell and Webster counties in areas outside of Subarea 4 will not be considered. (A map of the affected area is attached.)

“The water resources affected by the suspension are a significant source of water for irrigation,” said EPD Director Jud Turner. “A continued increase in withdrawals from these resources may ultimately lead to unacceptable impacts to existing users or compromise the sustainable capacities of these resources.”

The suspension applies to new applications for groundwater withdrawal from the Floridan aquifer, as well as applications for surface water pumping from streams and rivers in the Spring Creek, Ichawaynochaway Creek, Kinchafoonee-Muckalee Creek, and Lower Flint river sub-basins in the Flint River Basin. The suspension also applies to applications to modify existing permits to increase withdrawals or increase the number of irrigated acres.

“This suspension will give us time to update the mathematical models used to assess water resources in the area and to evaluate the impact of increased withdrawals,” said EPD Director Turner. “The suspension will be re-evaluated annually beginning in November 2013.”

The suspension does not apply to permit applications from other areas of the lower Flint and Chattahoochee River basins. For more information contact the EPD Agricultural Permitting Office in Tifton at 229-391-2400.

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