



July 31, 2013

Dr. Bennett Bearden  
Chair, Alabama Water Agencies Working Group  
P. O. Box 20276  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35402-0276

Dear Dr. Bearden:

The following comments are provided in response to your request during a recent public meeting on the topic of state water policy. They represent the views of Lake Watch of Lake Martin.

Lake Watch strongly supports the efforts of the Alabama Water Agencies Working Group to develop a comprehensive water resources management plan for the state. For too long the state has struggled to define how our valuable water resources are used, which puts these precious resources in jeopardy, particularly in the context of the ongoing 'Water Wars' involving Alabama, Georgia, and Florida.

We are in full agreement with the recommendations from the Alabama Water Watch Program office at Auburn University, in particular with how the state can and should use the vast amount of water quality data collected by more than 70 citizen water monitoring groups affiliated with AWW. Those groups represent thousands of people who live on state water bodies and have a deep understanding of the importance of protecting those waters. They are true stakeholders that collect science-based, credible water information on a regular basis. AWW must also be provided adequate state funding in order that the program can continue.

We see two critical aspects in your efforts.

1. Do not wait for the perfect plan because it will never happen. Do the best you can and get it passed. Modifications can be made in the future.
2. You must reform the departmental oversight of our water resources. The state can have the best water resources management plan possible but it will fail without a major overhaul of who is responsible for its implementation. Having water quality responsibility in one agency (ADEM) and water quantity responsibility in another (ADECA/OWR) makes the implementation of comprehensive water resources management extremely difficult. The two aspects (quality and quantity) are inextricably connected and we must recognize that.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathryn Braund".

Kathryn Braund

President, Lake Watch of Lake Martin