

Madame Mayor, Respected Commissioners

My name is Peter Norris; I reside at 460 Sunset Drive, Athens.

I am the vice-chair of the Upper Oconee Watershed Network.

I rise in opposition to that component of the Service Delivery Plan specifying \$20 million for a new reservoir because it is unnecessary and will have enormous environmental and economic costs.

The consultant who created the Service Delivery Plan overestimated water demand resulting from population growth. It is unrealistic to expect that water use follows the same linear curve as the state's population growth prediction. In fact, here in Athens we have managed to reduce our water consumption while increasing population!

A reservoir is environmentally disruptive because it fundamentally and irreversibly alters the topography and biological stability of the region. It is not even assured that a new reservoir can be filled as the Georgia EPD has over-allocated withdrawal permits for the Middle and North Oconee rivers.

The \$20M figure is an estimate for just preliminary design and site selection. Engineering design, construction, and maintenance can cost \$30M to \$40M. But because of inevitable cost overruns, we can expect the final bill to be significantly more. Your colleagues in Walton County believed they were being prudent by budgeting \$41M dollars for Hard Labor Creek Reservoir. That project will end up costing about \$350M, and it will be at least three years before they can withdraw any water from the reservoir.

None of this information is new to you as it has been sent to you by Dr. Kyle McKay and Dr. Chris Manganiello, local experts in hydrology and water policy. I urge you to base your decision on documented facts rather than relying on outdated practices and misperception.

We understand the difference between water conservation and a drought management plan and support staff's efforts to develop a risk analysis for our water supply. The best

way to reduce risk is to reduce one's exposure to risk. The Water Conservation office has done an outstanding job of helping us use less water, thereby reducing our exposure, but we have only scratched the surface of water conservation possibilities. To the best of my knowledge there has been little discussion behind the rail of implementing proven best practices such as low flow fixtures, pervious surfaces, domestic cisterns, and grey water irrigation for ornamental plants and lawns. It is my understanding that our zoning and construction codes prohibit some of these solutions.

This morning I performed some quick, back of the envelope calculations. There are about 41,400 private bathrooms in Athens-Clarke County. Assuming retail prices for fixtures and \$60 an hour labor for professional plumbers, we could replace every showerhead in the county with a low-flow shower head for a little over \$2M. To replace commode valves with dual flush valves would cost about \$2.7M.

We are currently losing approximately 10% of our treated water through leaking infrastructure. Recovering that lost water can be the equivalent of creating a small reservoir.

We urge you to reject any language, including place holder options, that considers creation of inefficient and uneconomic reservoirs. Please support the commission defined option that focuses on common sense solutions.

As always I thank you for your service.