



Fast Facts

According to the Alliance for Water Efficiency, water conservation and efficiency costs \$0.46 to \$1.40 per 1000 gallons of capacity while dams can cost \$4000 per 1000 gallons of capacity.

The average residential water use in the U.S. is 101 gallons per person a day, almost three times that of Brisbane, Australia which has the same high standard of living as the U.S.

Between 2003 and 2008, Cobb County maintained its 65 million gallons per day (MGD) consumption by investing in water efficiency despite a 10% increase in population.

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District water utilities collectively lose 16%, roughly 104 MGD, of their water supply to leaks and other unaccounted for uses.

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Secure Water Supply Through Investing in Water Conservation and Efficiency

What's at Stake?

Clean water is our birthright, the lifeblood for a way of life enjoyed by so many. Georgia faces unprecedented challenges to its clean water supply. Growing populations and the increased recurrence and duration of drought are putting new strains on communities and our limited water resources. The pressing question is: "How do we ensure enough clean, reliable water for current and future generations?"

Georgia has spent countless hours and millions of dollars attempting to maximize reservoir storage to the detriment of downstream users and neighboring states. We no longer have the dollars or time to waste in court rooms and on massive storage proposals. These short-sighted approaches have time and again failed to provide lasting relief to Georgians.

Georgia continues to attract businesses and the people who run those businesses from all over the country. Our water must be used wisely to support our growing communities- provide places we can all swim, boat, hunt and fish; taking only what we need from our rivers and leaving them as community assets.

Challenges

Traditionally, building more dams and reservoirs was the first and only answer for water supply managers and legislators. These antiquated approaches do not address the modern problem: we are not using our water wisely. Dams are fixed in one place and hold a limited amount of water. When we get replenishing rains to fill our many reservoirs, they lose tremendous amounts of water through evaporation. Lake Lanier loses up to 194 million gallons of water per day (MGD) to evaporation. The proposed Lower Little Tallapoosa Dam is estimated to provide roughly 10 MGD while costing taxpayers \$115 million. In contrast, DeKalb County's new water efficiency program will provide taxpayers with nearly as much water, 9 million gallons per day, at less than a tenth of the cost, \$10.6 million.

Conservation and efficiency leverage our water resources to go farther and do more. By using less water and being more efficient in what we do use, we can ensure we have enough affordable clean water for our families, neighbors and businesses. Georgia leaders must champion these modern solutions to secure our water supply.

Next Steps

The Legislature should:

- Require community water supply plans approved by Georgia EPD include at a minimum: a leak detection and mitigation plan, metering of all water users, tiered water pricing that sends a conservation price signal, and technical and/or financial assistance for water users to increase their efficiency.
- Provide no less than \$25 million for communities to implement strong water efficiency programs.
- Pass legislation requiring the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority to provide technical assistance to utilities and communities on water conservation and efficiency programs and policies.

Georgia EPD should require that community plans be updated bi-annually and that water permittees report water use to EPD on a monthly basis. EPD should make these reports available to the public at a minimum online via the internet.