



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Division of Water Resources

Michael F. Easley, Governor

William G. Ross Jr., Secretary
John Morris, Director

January 15, 2004

MEMORANDUM

To: North Carolina Water Users and Interested Parties

From: Linwood Peele, Chief, Water Supply Planning Section

Subject: **Implementation of House Bill 1215 Related to Water Conservation**

The multi-year drought that culminated in 2002 affected most of North Carolina and stressed many water supply systems. A number of communities experienced economic damage as a result of water shortages and some were close to running out of water. The experience with the drought emphasized the importance of renewing our efforts to manage our water supplies wisely.

As one response to the drought, the North Carolina General Assembly passed House Bill 1215 (Session Law 2002-167) during the 2002 legislative session.

Section 5 of House Bill 1215 calls on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to evaluate water conservation measures being implemented in North Carolina and to identify incentive programs and other voluntary programs that can help foster water conservation and water reuse.

Response to this legislative mandate is being accomplished by the Division of Water Resources, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, and the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance, with assistance from other divisions. We held a public meeting on March 7, 2003, with representatives from many water using interests and other interested parties to discuss this requirement of House Bill 1215 and to receive ideas. We got some additional information as a follow-up from participants at this meeting. We are getting additional information from the local water supply plans being submitted by the over 600 local public water supply systems required to complete plans. We are also consulting published literature on water conservation and water reuse for ideas that are applicable to North Carolina.

The report to the Environmental Review Commission and the Environmental Management Commission is due on February 15, 2004. As we are completing our work on this mandate, we invite and urge you to send us your additional ideas on appropriate measures for increasing water use efficiency in North Carolina and incentives and voluntary programs that would be desirable to encourage the use of these measures. Please send your ideas to Linwood Peele at Linwood.Peele@ncmail.net. We will be making this information available to the public on our webpage in the near future. We request receiving your suggestions by January 23 in order to meet our deadline.

A copy of House Bill 1215 is attached for reference. Please note that Section 3 of this Act requires the Department to develop an administrative rule governing water conservation and water reuse during drought and water emergency situations. The Department will be responding to this mandate on a separate track, which will involve creating an advisory committee and receiving suggestions from the public to help us draft the administrative rule, which will then go through the normal public hearing and comment process.

Increasing water use efficiency in North Carolina is a complex task that will require the efforts of many types of water users over a substantial period of time. We will invite public comments and suggestions on our report on Section 5 of HB 1215. Development of the rules on emergency water conservation required by Section 3 of this bill may suggest the need for revisions in the recommendations under Section 5. We anticipate that we will review and revise the Section 5 report based on public comments and on the progress of the Section 3 rules.

We appreciate your help with Section 5 of House Bill 1215. If you have any questions about how we are approaching this legislative mandate, please contact Linwood Peele at (919) 715-5455.

JM/km