



November 23, 2007

Mr. Melvin Davis, Chairman
Oconee County Board of Commissioners
Oconee County Courthouse
23 N. Main Street
Watkinsville, GA 30677

Dear Mr. Davis:

The Georgia Water Coalition, a group of individuals and organizations working to ensure that the waters of the state continue to belong to the people of the state, has drafted a resolution regarding water policy in Georgia. Friends of Barber Creek, one of the 149 Georgia Water Coalition partners, is asking the Board of Commissioners of Oconee County to pass this resolution on behalf of the citizens of Oconee County. A copy of the resolution is below.

The purpose of the resolution is to guarantee fair apportionment of Georgia's waters to all portions of the state. This resolution asks the General Assembly to provide full funding for water planning on a regional and state level. It also asks for legislation prohibiting future transfers of water across the 14 river basins in the state.

The ongoing drought has made citizens of Oconee County and of the state aware of the precious nature of our water resources. The response to the drought indicates that the state currently lacks the information it needs to ensure that this resource will be managed sustainably in the future to balance the needs of natural systems, downstream economies, and other uses such as recreation, power generation and industry.

Because much of the population growth to date has occurred in the northern part of the state, where numerous rivers have their headwaters, water historically has been transferred from one river basin to another to meet increasing human demands. These transfers unfairly rob the donor basin of water that should flow downstream to support other economies and uses. More and larger transfers may occur in the future if this pattern is not halted by the legislature.

Through its partners, the Georgia Water Coalition is presenting this resolution to governing authorities across the state. The following entities already have passed the resolution: Putnam County, LaGrange, Liberty County, Chatham County, Rome, Floyd County, City of Tybee, Brantley County, City of Metter, Evans County, Hart County, City of Lavonia, City of Hartwell, Bryan County, Troup County, Ware County and the Satilla Regional Water and Sewer Authority.

The Board of Directors of Friends of Barber Creek urges the Oconee County Board of Commissioners to pass this resolution expeditiously so Oconee County can offer its support for the Georgia Water Coalitions efforts to ensure that water is managed fairly for all Georgians, with the interest of all citizens, businesses and farms in mind.

I will attend the Board of Commissioners Agenda Meeting on November 27 to ask you either to pass this resolution or schedule it for discussion at your December 4, 2007 meeting.

Sincerely,



Lee B. Becker
President, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Friends of Barber Creek

Lee B. Becker, President (1050 Scott Terrace)
Tim Price, Vice President (1240 Hollow Creek Lane)
Karen Kimbaris, Secretary-Treasurer (1031 Willow Ridge)
Joe Block, Member (1281 Founders Lake Drive)

Mailing Address for Friends of Barber Creek:

1050 Scott Terrace
Athens, GA 30606 (Oconee County)

Tel. 706 548-1525

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, there is increased pressure on the surface and ground water resources within the State of Georgia, but a lack of information as to the natural quantities of water in its rivers and aquifers, and

WHEREAS, the Oconee County Board of Commissioners believes that the surface and ground waters of the state should continue to be managed in the public interest and in a sustainable manner to protect natural systems and meet human and economic needs, and

WHEREAS, protection and restoration of water resources requires regional water planning, based on assessments of watersheds, river basins, and aquifers, that is tied to implementation, including a comprehensive management process, and

WHEREAS, protection of river basins must be strengthened to reflect scientific knowledge and respect natural systems, and

WHEREAS, downstream communities in Georgia rely on certain flow levels in river basins for current and future economic development, recreation, and environmental quality, and

WHEREAS, decisions on new water supplies for growing communities should recognize that efficiency and the wise use of current resources are the best course for taxpayers, and

WHEREAS, transferring water from one basin to another can adversely affect downstream communities and unfairly redistribute economic growth,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Oconee County Board of Commissioners supports and adopts the principles outlined above and urges the General Assembly of Georgia to fully fund comprehensive regional and statewide water planning and monitoring,

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Oconee County Board of Commissioners urges the General Assembly of Georgia to pass a statute that prevents the transfer of water from one basin to another to the detriment of current and future downstream economic growth or to the detriment of the natural health of the stream.

Duly adopted the ____ day of _____, 2007.