



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"...conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them."



SUBJECT: STATE WATER POLICY

WHEREAS, Louisiana is blessed with abundant ground and surface water resources but growing demand for agricultural, industrial, business and residential water use makes it essential to the future prosperity of our state to manage this resource wisely, and

WHEREAS, historically, Louisiana government and citizens have been more concerned with having too much water (flooding) than water shortages, and the concept of water conservation is relatively new to our state, and

WHEREAS, unprecedented drought experienced by much of the state over the past 3 years, pumping of aquifers at unsustainable rates by existing water users, recent proposals to site several new power-generating facilities requesting withdrawals of large quantities of water from the state's aquifers, the drought-related dieback of thousands of acres of coastal marsh vegetation, the specter of interstate water transfers, and the drying up of water wells and the encroachment of saltwater into public drinking water supplies have coalesced to lend an urgency to dealing with the issue of water conservation in Louisiana, and

WHEREAS, nearly 20 years ago the Louisiana Water Resources Study Commission (LWRSC), after many months of study and review, presented numerous water policy and conservation recommendations to the Louisiana Legislature (1984 report) but many of those recommendations have not been addressed, and

WHEREAS, in response to the renewed interest in water conservation a task force has been appointed by the governor and legislation has been prefiled to begin the process of establishing a state water conservation and management policy, and program, and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's signature wetland ecosystems, its swamps, bayous and marshes harboring world-class assemblages of waterfowl, wading birds and shore birds, its unsurpassed commercial and recreational estuarine fisheries, its fascinating alligator and ubiquitous swamp crawfish, and all of its other fish and wildlife resources are dependent on a plentiful supply of uncontaminated water for survival, and

WHEREAS, ground and surface water sources are inextricably linked and should be conserved and managed together within the context of an overall state water policy, and

WHEREAS, with cooperation, respect for the needs of all water users including fish and wildlife, and determination to conserve and manage our water resources for a sustainable and

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economically prosperous future, Louisiana's water resources can remain plentiful for many years to come, but without that commitment embodied in an equitable and far-sighted water policy, the future will be manipulated by water shortages and reaction to crisis.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) supports the adoption of a state water policy and water management program that will sustain Louisiana's abundant ground and surface water resources in quantity and quality sufficient to meet the needs of its citizens, including healthy ecosystems and fish and wildlife resources, agricultural production and industrial uses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LWF urges adoption of state water policy that encourages water conservation and efficient use of ground and surface waters, and that establishes conservation standards sufficient to maintain healthy drinking water supplies and minimum "in-stream flows" to sustain the health of Louisiana's wetland and aquatic ecosystems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, as first steps in implementing a comprehensive water policy, LWF urges that the state to: establish its authority to manage the withdrawal and use of ground and public surface waters; require the registration of all water wells (for groundwater withdrawal) and intakes (for pumping public surface waters in excess of a minimum volume); require permits for all new water withdrawals from public supplies; and establish conservation standards for each water supply upon which defensible decisions can be based should it be necessary to deny or limit water withdrawals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF commends the Governor and Legislature for recognizing the necessity of establishing a water policy for Louisiana and offers assistance in any appropriate capacity to help achieve a sound water policy for the state.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in convention assembled, 62nd Annual Meeting, March 4, 2001 in Many, Louisiana.