



Surface Water Availability Assessment in South Carolina Legislative Quarterly Report, April 2014

Background

South Carolina currently has limited scientific information about the future demands on and availability of our water supply. As a result, the General Assembly allocated \$1.5M to complement South Carolina's new surface water permitting program administered by SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), and to gather the information necessary to update the State Water Plan developed by SC Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The two agencies are in the process of gathering data on South Carolina's eight basins: Broad, Catawba, Edisto, Pee Dee, Salkehatchie, Saluda, Santee, and Savannah.



Scientific Process for Measurement and Legislative Reporting

The availability assessment will develop a computer-generated model of each of the eight basins to evaluate existing water availability. These analyses will be used to inform the resource agencies and stakeholders if there are areas of the State where there is a “gap” or concern about the amount of water needed to meet our increasing demands over the next 50 years.

The funds appropriated above to the DNR for the State River Basin Study Project must be used for water data collection to provide scientific information on water resources in the state’s eight major river basins. The DNR shall, in cooperation with DHEC, submit to the Senate Finance Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and the House Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee, a report on the project’s timeline, findings, and expenditure of funds on a quarterly basis. Additionally, this information will be posted electronically on DNR and DHEC websites.

Status of the Scientific Water Assessment

DHEC and DNR are providing joint oversight of the assessment process. DNR is responsible for tracking the monies spent and publishing the Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a contractor to develop the models. Both agencies have collaboratively engaged their scientists to develop the RFP for the modeling of the eight designated basins in the State. Additionally, a day long stakeholder meeting was facilitated by both agencies. Management, Purchasing, Information Technology, and Technical staff of both DNR and DHEC participated. As a result, a straight-forward, technically-based document was completed and accepted by the Directors of DHEC and DNR in December 2013, and the RFP was sent by DNR to the Budget Control Board for review and release on January 17, 2014. On Friday, April 11, 2014, the Budget & Control Board released the Request for Proposals (RFP) on this project for a thirty-day bid process. The selection panel has been appointed and they will review proposals as soon as the bid process is completed.

Status of the State Water Plan

As the water Assessment is being modeled, stakeholders will come together to provide input on how to manage the finite resource by creating an updated State Water Plan. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between DNR, DHEC, and Clemson University on January 13, 2014, to draft a work plan that will suggest a framework within which all stakeholders can come together and provide input to be included in an updated State Water Plan.