

LOUISIANA WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION

Thursday, October 1, 2015

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Office of Conservation Staff Update

Water Resources Commission

Duties and Responsibilities – Groundwater Management

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- ❑ Review and approve or reject any Comm. of Conservation orders restrictions on water well placement upon petition by the owner of the affected well, or any owner which may adversely impacted by the well in question. (NO PETITIONS TO DATE)
- ❑ Review rules and regulations proposed by the Commissioner of Conservation pursuant to the proper administration and enforcement of Ch. 13-A-1, Water Resources Management. (ONGOING)
- ❑ Continue the development, in cooperation with the Comm. of Conservation, of a statewide ground water resources management program (ONGOING)
- ❑ Review the contingency plan developed by the Commissioner of Conservation to respond to a ground water emergency. (COMPLETED)

Water Resources Commission

Member Duties and Responsibilities – Surface Water, Administrative

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- ❑ Evaluate the state's surface water resources including current and projected demands, surface water supplies, technical research, potential future deficit areas, alternative use scenarios, incentives, technologies, public education and conservation programs. (ONGOING)
- ❑ Direct the Comm. of Conservation to promulgate rules and regulations for the appointment or designation of up to five regional bodies based on the general location of major aquifer systems and water sources of the state and composed of local stakeholders who are representative of current users. (PENDING ADDITIONAL STUDY)
- ❑ Attend relevant meetings called by Comm. of Conservation; meet as a body at least twice a year (ONGOING)

Commissioner of Conservation Groundwater Management Authority (Resource Sustainability)

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- ❑ The Comm. of Conservation is “empowered and responsible for the administration of all matters related to the management of the state’s groundwater resources”
- ❑ Has “authority to make . . . any reasonable rules, regulations, and orders that are necessary from time to time in the proper administration and enforcement” for following purposes:

Commissioner of Conservation Groundwater Management Authority (Resource Sustainability)

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- ❑ Do all things necessary to prevent waste of water resources
- ❑ Prevent or alleviate damaging or potentially damaging salt water movement or water level decline and loss of sustainability in the state's aquifers
- ❑ Prevent subsidence of the land surface caused by the withdrawal of groundwater
- ❑ Require registration of all new water wells
- ❑ Determine areas of groundwater concern and designate critical areas of groundwater concern
- ❑ Collect data with respect to water wells and water resources; continue development of a statewide groundwater resource management program
- ❑ Issue compliance orders and civil penalties

Definitions of Sustainability

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- ❑ “Sustainable” from *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*: 1. able to be used without being completely used up or destroyed 2. involving methods that do not completely use up or destroy natural resources 3. able to last or continue for a long time
- ❑ UN’s Brundtland Commission (1983): “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
- ❑ From USGS Circular 1186 (1999): “*In this report, we define ground-water sustainability as development and use of ground water in a manner that can be maintained for an indefinite time without causing unacceptable environmental, economic, or social consequences.*”
- ❑ From the National Ground Water Association (2004): “*There is no universally accepted scientific definition of ground water sustainability that is applicable in all situations. For purposes of this paper, ground water sustainability is the development and use of ground water to meet both current and future beneficial purposes without causing unacceptable consequences.*”

Sustainability as Defined in Louisiana Law

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- ❑ Definition from Ch. 13-A-1. Water Resources Management, R.S. 38:3097.2: “ *Sustainability means the development and use of ground water in a manner that can be maintained for the present and future time without causing unacceptable environmental, economic, social, or health consequences.*”
- ❑ Coupled with definition in same statute for an “ Area of ground water concern,” which “ *shall mean an area in which, under current usage and normal environmental conditions, sustainability of an aquifer is not being maintained due to either movement of a salt water front, water level decline, or subsidence, resulting in unacceptable environmental, economic, social, or health impact, or causing serious adverse impact to an aquifer*”

Contact Information

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