

Dr. Rosemond,

Thank you for your comments regarding the draft Regional Water Plans. We value your expertise and input, and thank you for your prior service in the development of the Water Water Plan. Each of the 10 Regional Water Planning Councils have considered your comments, and they have authorized EPD to provide this collective response to the concerns you have raised.

Pursuant to Section 14 of the State Water Plan, Council members are appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House and must reside in the counties of each planning region. The appointing officials may “consider pre-qualified nominees for appointment, as well as such other individuals as they may choose.” EPD is open to receiving any nominees that the Odum School of Ecology or others may recommend for appointment to the Regional Water Planning Councils. Those nominations can be sent to me, and they can then be included in any future recommendations shared with the appointing officials.

Regarding your comments on water quality and monitoring of waters of the State, the plans do address the current water quality conditions in Section 3, including consideration of the Georgia’s Integrated 305(b)/303(d) Report. During the planning process, the councils consider the most current water quality data that has been collected by Georgia EPD and other entities. The information that Councils receive is also available on EPD’s database website <https://gomaspublish.gaepd.org/> and through USGS gage records. The Council’s Plans have and continue to stress the need for continuous monitoring, as well as the collection of additional data. Additionally, the Councils also consider surface water quality and quality modeling (resource assessment) results that analyze water quality parameters that correlate with the state’s water quality standards. Importantly, these models analyze both current conditions (including model calibration) as well as future conditions based on water demands and returns that are projected 40 years into the future. These models analyze a variety of water quality conditions, including both dry/drought and wet/stormwater-driven conditions, and can continue to be utilized in future planning cycles to analyze extreme weather events (e.g., long-term drought).

[Jennifer’s signature]