



## LAKE HARTWELL ASSOCIATION. INC

### INTERBASIN TRANSFERS

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#### **A Position Paper of the Lake Hartwell Association November 16, 2004**

Interbasin transfers, the permission to transfer a specific quantity of water out of one river basin into another, are always a concern to the Hartwell Lake area. Interbasin transfers from the Savannah River Basin (SRB) in Hartwell Lake or anywhere above Hartwell Lake are of course, of most concern. Currently, applications to withdraw water may be submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) by any official organization with a demonstrated need. Should the application be approved the water will be set aside or reserved for that organization. While the Corps does have a specific set of criteria to follow before granting the permit, they are primarily concerned with current operational impacts (i.e. Is there enough water available in the basin to grant the permit without impacting other USACE approved purposes). This water grant is done on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Lake Hartwell Association (LHA) is concerned with the ability of organizations to request an interbasin transfer for long-term use without demonstrating any specific immediate or pending emergency need for the water. We feel a set of specific criteria should be used as a measure of the need prior to granting an interbasin transfer. LHA also feels there is currently not enough information available to clearly indicate the long-term impact of interbasin transfers on the future water requirements of the SRB. While LHA is not, and should not be, totally against interbasin transfers, we do not support the approval of any interbasin grant applications – new or renewal – unless the requesting basin has demonstrated an emergency requirement for water that cannot be met through resources within its own basin. In that case, the basin of origin should be assured the interbasin transfer agreement/contract is based on a well-defined, immediate need along with data based on hard science that clearly indicates the availability of water in the basin for the period needed.

Considering the above background, the Lake Hartwell Association has developed the following criteria for consideration prior to granting any new interbasin transfer or agreeing to extend any existing interbasin transfers such as the one granted to the Greenville Water System. Legislation and regulations in both Georgia and South Carolina should reflect the same sensible criteria to use when evaluating interbasin transfers in either state.

Interbasin transfers should be granted based on:

1. Demonstrated need resulting from some emergency requirement in an adjoining basin;
2. Sound science\* indicating the receiving basin has exhausted all other available water capacity within its own basin;
3. Sound science\* which indicates the basin of origin has sufficient water to provide the transfer for a defined LIMITED period of time;

4. Limits on the distance water resulting from an interbasin transfer is allowed to travel beyond the current basin. It is the recommendation of LHA that any county at least part of which resides within the Savannah River Basin may transfer water throughout their entire county, including portions of that county residing in another river basin, but not beyond. Any county residing completely outside of the Savannah River Basin shall not be allowed to transfer water out of the Savannah River Basin.
5. Protection for the basin of origin in all matters relating to interbasin transfers. This could be in the form of a contract and include compensation in terms of money, future water amounts, or some other satisfactory provision;
6. As much highly treated wastewater as possible should be returned to the basin of origin near the withdrawal point;
7. Existing Interbasin Transfers should be required to meet the same above criteria when their current contract has expired. If a future or continued need cannot be clearly demonstrated the transfer volume should be reduced or eliminated; and
8. The belief that water is a public resource and should not be considered a commodity to be sold to any entity, with the exception of those criteria identified in items 1 through 5 above, for the purpose of making a profit.

\* It is hoped and expected that the Savannah River Basin Comprehensive Water Study currently being conducted by the USACE in conjunction with the States of South Carolina and Georgia will provide the basis of data for sound science considerations.

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