

## 8. POLICY POSITION

### GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

#### Background

Groundwater provides 51 percent of the nation's population with its fresh water supplies. In the South, 54 percent of the region's population depends upon groundwater for its drinking water. In many counties in the South, groundwater provides 100 percent of the drinking water supplied. Regional conflicts are on the rise among competing users for the groundwater supplies in the South. Excessive pumpage in certain aquifers has created resource degradation as the sustain yield capabilities of the formations are exceeded. In certain coastal areas, serious saltwater intrusion problems have occurred as a result of over pumpage, and large groundwater withdrawals from unconfined or partially confined aquifers for public drinking water supplies are highly susceptible to contamination associated with certain land use activities.

#### Recommendation

The Southern Legislative Conference supports development of state groundwater appropriation designed to minimize user conflict and manage aquifers on a sustained yield basis so as to insure that groundwater will always be capable of supplying a significant percentage of the region's drinking water supplies.

The basis for the state groundwater appropriation permit activities is the reasonableness of the impact of proposed withdrawals on the groundwater's resources of an area and the reasonableness of the impact of proposed withdrawals on other users of the groundwater resources of an area.

All major users of groundwater, including municipal, industrial, commercial and institutional users, should be subject to the permitting activities of the state groundwater appropriation permit programs.

Further, the Southern Legislative Conference supports funding of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Wellhead Protection Program designed to assist states in developing programs, procedures, guidelines and criteria for protecting public groundwater drinking supplies from contamination associated with certain land use activities.