Guiding Principles for Establishing State Water Conservation Policy

The FSAWWA Utility Council supports appropriate water conservation practices for all water users in Florida, including public supply. Water conservation is an important tool to ensure that Florida achieves its water needs while minimizing environmental impacts.

The FSAWWA Utility Council recognizes that different parts of Florida present different water resource and economic challenges; however, the state could more effectively address these challenges with an effective, overarching state water conservation policy. An effective state water conservation policy will help ensure that water resources are available to support Florida’s economic growth in all sectors.

The FSAWWA Utility Council supports the following guiding principles in the establishment of a state water conservation policy:

1. **Water Conservation Goals.** Through cooperative agreement of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the water management districts (WMDs) and water utilities, a process should be established for setting water conservation goals based on uniform metrics and taking regional, socio-economic, and resource variations into account. A water utility that meets its applicable goal achieves reasonable beneficial demand.

2. **Education.** State water conservation policy should include a prominent public education component to encourage personal behaviors that conserve water. FDEP, WMDs, and water utilities should work cooperatively to deliver consumer education that promotes water conservation.

3. **Local Conditions.** State water conservation policy should establish appropriate conservation programs that recognize the range of Florida’s socio-economic characteristics, transient and seasonal populations, soil and climate variability, and development densities.

4. **Consistency.** State water conservation policy must promote consistency throughout Florida to the extent possible while allowing conservation programs to be tailored to local conditions.

5. **Existing Local Programs.** State water conservation policy should recognize that water utilities have implemented a wide range of conservation programs that have resulted in various levels of efficiency. State water conservation policy should promote and incentivize conservation programs recognizing those programs and achievements that have already been implemented by water utilities within their service area.
6. **Self Supply.** State water conservation policy should appropriately regulate self-supply wells for domestic use and irrigation based on water supply constraints, and ensures that self supply entities are treated consistently with customers connected to public water supply systems.

7. **Reclaimed Water.** State water conservation policy should recognize that reclaimed water systems represent the opportunity to re-use water that has already been removed from the environment. The use of reclaimed water should be encouraged where appropriate and where its use off-sets or minimizes additional withdrawals.

8. **Feasibility.** Water Conservation programs must be economically, technically, and environmentally feasible in order to be implemented.

9. **Water Distribution System Impacts.** State water conservation policy must balance water conservation goals with water quality impacts resulting from demand reductions.

10. **Water Conservation Clearinghouse.** State water conservation policy should support and fund the Statewide Clearinghouse to create a data base to quantify the benefit of conservation practices including variations by geographic region.

11. **Water Conservation Rate Structure.** Water utilities acknowledge that water pricing is an essential component of a utility’s water conservation program. Each water utility should establish a rate structure that provides a price incentive to the customer to conserve. However, a water utility must design and structure its rates to accomplish dual goals of meeting financial requirements and promoting water conservation while taking into consideration the composition and use characteristics of its customer base. Therefore, the WMDs must allow water utilities wide latitude in designing their rate structures and should limit their review to whether that structure provides economic incentive for conservation. A water utility should be able to demonstrate that their pricing structure promotes conservation. In accordance with existing law, a WMD shall not fix or revise rates.

12. **Water Distribution System Efficiency.** State water conservation policy should encourage water utilities to reduce non-revenue water use by applying water audit methods recommended by the International Water Association/American Water Works Association.

13. **Water Metering.** Service to retail and wholesale water users should be metered to promote water conservation.

14. **Conservation Incentives.** State water conservation policy should incentivize water conservation practices for progressive water utilities that use less water than the goals established for those utilities. If a water utility uses less water than the established goal, the consumptive use permit for the water utility should be extended to reflect the additional conservation.