

AGENDA NOTE – HRPDC ANNUAL COMMISSION MEETING

ITEM #6: GROUNDWATER WITHDRAWAL PERMITS

SUBJECT:

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has proposed cutting the permitted groundwater withdrawals of the largest fourteen users. Eight of the fourteen permits are held by localities in Hampton Roads.

BACKGROUND:

Virginia DEQ has concluded that the existing withdrawals from the Coastal Plain aquifer system are not sustainable. DEQ reported to the State Water Commission that withdrawals are contributing to declining water levels, saltwater intrusion and land subsidence. DEQ manages the aquifer with Groundwater Withdrawal Permits for all users that withdraw more than 10,000 gallons per day. The fourteen largest groundwater users each have a permit for more than 1,000,000 gallons per day (1 MGD). The permittees are listed below:

Permits up for Renewal

- City of Chesapeake
- City of Franklin
- City of Portsmouth
- James City Service Authority
- Newport News Waterworks
- Western Tidewater Water Authority (Isle of Wight County & City of Suffolk)
- International Paper (mill in Franklin)
- RockTenn (paper mill in West Point)
- Hercules Incorporated (Ashland)
- Portsmouth Genco (Cogentrix)

Permits reissued with reductions

- City of Norfolk
- Town of Smithfield
- Colonial Williamsburg
- Smithfield Packing Company

DEQ has held meetings with each user that has a permit up for renewal and suggested a specific reduction to the permit. DEQ would like all eight permits to be issued by September 2015 and include steps to reach the reductions within the ten year permit term.

ACTION:

Authorize the HRPDC chairman to send a letter to David Paylor, Director of DEQ, asking him to (1) continue to coordinate closely with HRPDC and its member localities, (2) allow the HRPDC and its localities sufficient time to consider the impacts of DEQ's proposed permit reductions on the regional water supply, and (3) work with the HRPDC and its member localities to gain regional support for a long-term solution.