

PA COUNCIL OF TROUT UNLIMITED
POLICY ON WATER WITHDRAWAL
AND INTER-BASIN WATER TRANSFER

APRIL 2008

Clean water in abundance is vital to aquatic and wetland communities and their inhabitants, including fish, wildlife and plants.

Pennsylvanians depend on clean and abundant water resources for industry, commerce, agriculture and everyday life activities.

Pennsylvania has been blessed with an abundance of surface and ground water, but has squandered its water resources through neglect, abuse, and the failure to consider water as both a public resource and a critical ecosystem essential. Since all waters of the Commonwealth are hydrologically interconnected, and the health and welfare of Pennsylvania's citizens, economy, and natural resources depend upon both the quantity and quality of our water, PA Council holds the following official policy on water withdrawals and inter-basin water transfers:

1. Water resources shall be managed on a watershed and regional basis. All efforts shall be directed to maintaining and improving water quantity and quality within a watershed.
2. Transfers between watersheds shall be limited. These transfers defeat the objective of using watersheds as hydrological units and negatively affect aquatic ecosystems and the natural diversity of both the donor and receiving watersheds.
3. There shall be a complete inventory and assessment of all Commonwealth water resources. This shall include surface waters; ground water systems including recharge locations, recharge amounts, discharge amounts and withdrawals, and watershed land uses. The goal for the inventory shall be a database for decision making designed to conserve aquatic ecosystems and natural diversity while providing for other water uses.
4. Cumulative effects of all water users within a watershed unit and the general condition of a watershed unit shall be considered before permitting decisions are made.
5. Water withdrawals from both surface and groundwater sources shall be limited to ensure that surface water flows are adequate to protect aquatic ecosystems and natural diversity. Consumptive water users, including golf courses, bottled water companies, power plants, municipalities, agricultural and industrial users, shall be regulated to achieve this goal. The primary objective is to maintain stream flows at levels that will not negatively affect aquatic ecosystems and natural diversity. If measurable degradation occurs, the Commonwealth must hold all those exceeding their allocations accountable.
6. Water conservation shall be enforced by permitting; and, as currently required, all water users exceeding a withdrawal of 10,000 gal./day, must report their water consumption to the PA Dept of Environmental Protection. Water taken by municipal water systems shall be minimized and enforced at a twenty percent or less level.

7. Emphasis shall be placed on optimizing groundwater recharge, particularly in urban areas. Expansion of impermeable surfaces shall be discouraged and permeable surfaces shall be used where supported by sound engineering practice. Where necessary and feasible, impermeable surfaces shall be replaced by permeable surfaces.
8. New standards for conservation and construction for private water wells shall be developed and enforced.
9. Industrial users of water shall be permitted only for closed loop systems, thereby eliminating water withdrawals and net losses to the water reserve.
10. There shall be a public education process, including schools and adult education, with the goal to develop a broad base of citizen support for water resource conservation and enhancement.