



Alabama Rivers Alliance
Water is Life

ALABAMA WATER CONSERVATION AND SECURITY ACT

- **Requires the state to protect the flow of water in Alabama's 132,000 miles of Rivers and Streams**
- Provides a science based narrative standard for protecting stream flows
- Ensures that water resources are protected during times of drought or water shortage and clearly defines the conditions that would trigger state action to protect water resources
- Protects water users that conserve water ahead of time through **conservation credits**
- Works within the existing *Alabama Water Resources Law* to ensure that stream protections are coordinated with other water management activities
- Cleans up confusing sections of the existing law by removing section that required ADEM to enforce the Office of Water Resources administrative actions
- Provides opportunities for public participation so that all water users are treated fairly
- **Maintains existing policy that human consumption is highest priority for Alabama**



An analysis of existing state law reveals that no state agency is tasked to assess stream flows to ensure that water uses are sustainable and no agency is empowered to step in when water uses threaten the integrity of Alabama's water resources. The drought crisis of 2016 exposed the flaws in Alabama's current system when the flows in many streams and rivers across the state were severely reduced due to continued water withdrawals during a declared state of emergency. All over Alabama, there were clear examples of streams getting dangerously low or even drying out completely because of unchecked water withdrawals. Despite repeated news reports and calls from citizens across the state, no agency interceded to protect Alabama's rivers and streams. In April of 2017, the entire Mobile Bay Basin, encompassing more than 2/3 of Alabama, was listed as one of America's Most Endangered Rivers because of a failure to protect our stream flows.

The **Alabama Water Conservation and Security Act** will modify existing state law to require the Alabama Office of Water Resources to balance water withdrawals with protection of Alabama's water resources. This bill will define what aspects of the water resources the state will protect and it clearly defines the conditions that will trigger state action. With this, the state will be ready to meet future water shortages and water users will have a clear standard that will enable better water planning.

For more information please contact:

Mitchell Reid
Alabama Rivers Alliance
205.792.7937
mreid@alabamarivers.org