

PROTECTING ALABAMA'S FLOWING RIVERS

Briefing to the Alabama Senate Committee for Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

SB255

- Expands AG Irrigation use to Non-Riparians
- Intended to protect River systems by limiting amount that can be withdrawn
- Is not specific enough to ensure Flow protections are balanced with new uses

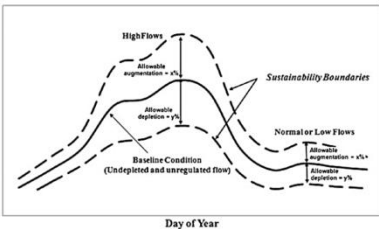
The Problem:

SB255 would allow up to 5 Percent of the average flow of a river to be withdrawn for non-riparian use. Without clear protections this could mean catastrophic reductions in flows which could endanger river ecology and potentially impact the Mobile Bay and Delta.

Proposal:

Clearly define what the state is protecting

INSTREAM INTEGRITY. The water flows and levels in a basin, river, stream, or other surface water body that determine the chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of that water body and which are required to maintain stream functions, support native aquatic life, and protect against pollution.



Establish clear triggers for when water uses must be restricted

WATER SHORTAGE. A condition in which the volume of water is insufficient to protect the instream integrity of a river, stream, or other surface water body and satisfy riparian uses.

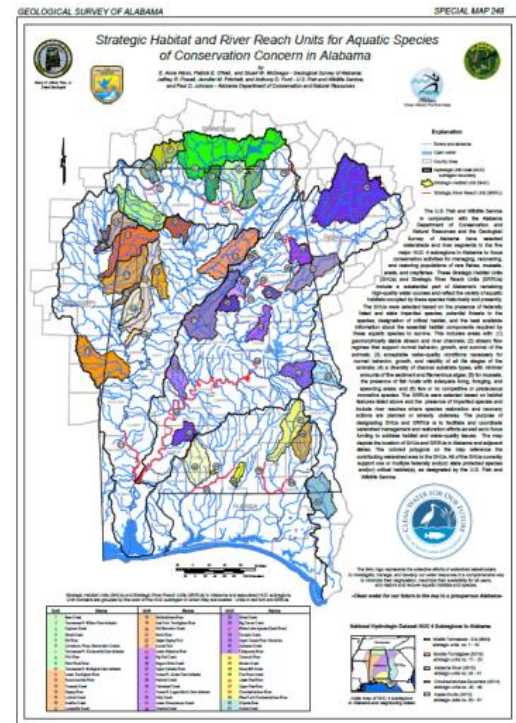
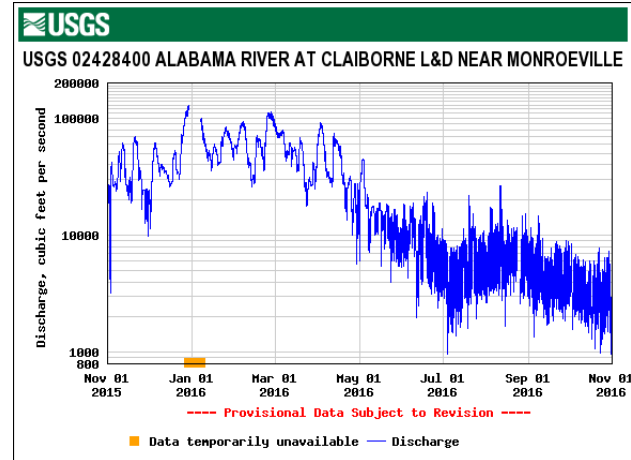
And

HYDROLOGIC DROUGHT. A condition in which the daily streamflow discharge of a river, stream, or other surface water body is below the 10th percentile for daily flows for that river, stream, or surface water body.

Long Term Solution:

Alabama needs a comprehensive water management plan that protects all users while ensuring that our rivers and streams have the water needed to remain productive ecosystems

Adopt scientifically based Instream Policy as part of the Alabama Sustainable Water Management Plan



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