

# TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission  
on Intergovernmental Relations



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM:  Wynnis Roehrich-Patrick  
Executive Director

DATE: 6 February 2013

SUBJECT: Regional Water Supply Planning Guidelines for Tennessee

Robert Martineau, Commissioner of Environment and Conservation, and Elaine Boyd, Director of Strategic Management for the department, will present the department's *Regional Water Supply Planning Guidelines for Tennessee*. This report is the culmination of a multi-year regional water supply planning effort by the commissioner's Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC). Pilot studies by the committee were presented to the Commission in June and September of 2011. A copy of the Guidelines will be distributed at the meeting.

The WRTAC was authorized by a general act of the General Assembly in 2002 as a part of the Tennessee Water Resources Information Act. The Act directed the Commissioner of TDEC to appoint the committee to advise the department on the status of the state's water resources and future planning efforts and left the membership of the committee to the discretion of the commissioner. The committee was activated when the seriousness of the 2007 drought became apparent and started meeting in 2008. The General Assembly made the WRTAC optional last year.

Commissioner Martineau is pursuing implementation of a number of recommendations from the WRTAC, re-established it, and charged it with recommending

- a process for approving regional water supply plans,
- a coordinated statewide system for reporting, maintenance and access to basic hydrologic and water system information, and
- an agency or organization to develop capacity for statewide analysis of hydrologic and water system information

as outlined in the attached document. TACIR continues to be represented on the committee.





**STATE OF TENNESSEE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION**  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0435

**ROBERT J. MARTINEAU, JR.**  
COMMISSIONER

**BILL HASLAM**  
GOVERNOR

**Charge to the Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee**

Public Chapter 986 of the Acts of 2012 rewrote Tenn. Code Ann. §69-7-309 concerning the technical advisory committee on water resource issues, effective October 1, 2012. Now, instead of mandating that there be such a committee, the law authorizes the Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC or the Department) to appoint such a committee.

As Commissioner, I am aware of and appreciate the collaboration and insightful work of the former Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee (WRTAC) and its working group. I commend this group specifically for establishing renewed focus on statewide drought planning and communicating heightened awareness to the need for more robust regional water planning in Tennessee. I received and reviewed the recommendations of the working group on how to move forward with regional planning efforts. Three of the committee's recommendations are at a stage at which the department can pursue implementation with specific agencies, namely:

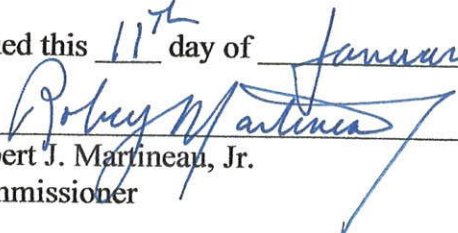
- Giving priority to approved regional plans in permitting and granting processes across state agencies;
- Maintaining a statewide modeling framework and support structure; and
- Funding conflict resolution services to support effective regional solutions to the extent feasible under fiscal restrictions.

I am using the other recommendations as the framework for my charge to the new WRTAC. I am asking the new Advisory Committee to:

1. Recommend by June 30, 2013 a process for approving regional water supply plans that includes, at least:
  - a. Identification of agency(s) involved in the review of the plan;
  - b. Required items for approval of the proposed region based on the Regional Water Resources Planning Guidelines;
  - c. Checklist of required elements of the plan based on the Regional Water Resources Planning Guidelines;
  - d. Who will grant or deny approvals;
  - e. Process for public involvement in the approval process;
  - f. Process for "appealing" a regional plan decision; and
  - g. Necessary rule or statute changes.

2. Propose by January 2, 2014 a coordinated statewide system for reporting, maintenance and access to basic hydrologic and water system information noting priorities where resources may limit the ability to do everything desirable by, at least:
  - a. Surveying the various "water-associated" organizations to determine what data they routinely collect;
  - b. Evaluating existing content and format for collection of TDEC Monthly Operation Reports;
  - c. Determining available water withdrawal information from various state and federal agencies (e.g., Division of Water Resources, TVA, TDOA, etc.);
  - d. Determining significant data gaps in water resource information, including, but not limited to, USGS gage data across the state;
  - e. Proposing means of consolidating data with one identified owner ; and
  - f. Making the data available to the public electronically.
  
3. Recommend by June 30, 2014 a proposed agency/organization to develop the capacity for statewide analysis of hydrologic and water system information, and includes, at least:
  - a. Recommended ways to address the data gaps identified in the proposal due January 2, 2014;
  - b. Projection of required resources for the agency/organization; and
  - c. Make preliminary determinations of the following, which will be further developed by the proposed agency/organization:
    - i. Estimated water needs—both immediate and long term—in areas most often impacted by drought or high growth;
    - ii. Evaluation of water conservation practices, successes and models of sustainability across the state;
    - iii. Identification of areas of potential conflicts due to instream flow issues;
    - iv. Listing of water systems with least reliable sources and few interconnections for emergency support; and
    - v. Listing of water systems principally relying on spring sources, low yielding wells or other source water vulnerabilities.

Issued this 11<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2013.

  
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Robert J. Martineau, Jr.  
Commissioner