

SECURING FLORIDA'S WATER FUTURE

The Florida Chamber's Plan for Making
Florida More Competitive by Preparing Florida's
Infrastructure for Smart Growth and Development

www.FloridaChamber.com/Water

PREPARING FLORIDA'S INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SMART GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

As a state surrounded on three sides by water, it's often difficult to imagine Florida having long-term water challenges. But as a state that receives more than 70 percent of our annual rainfall within just three months, there are several months of the year where there is little to no rainfall at all – leaving Florida in a vulnerable position when it comes to water supply.

Florida's unique natural beauty, vibrant agriculture base, and world class tourism industry has attracted economic growth, an increased population, and record visitors. Florida is now the third most populous state in the nation, which has increased the need for vital resources such as water.

According to the Florida Chamber Foundation, Florida's population is expected to grow by six million more residents by 2030.

“Rain water is what recharges and fills our lakes, streams and fresh water aquifers, and these are what supply our drinking water as well as sustain the environment.”

– PHILIP WALLER
VICE PRESIDENT, MWH AMERICAS

DID YOU KNOW:

- ▶ **Water demand is expected to increase 28 percent, to about nine billion gallons per day, between now and 2030.**
- ▶ **While the national average of rainfall each year is 30 inches, Florida receives an average of 54 inches of rain each year.**
- ▶ **Florida has more water quality data than any other state in the U.S.**
- ▶ **With more than 800 people moving to Florida every day, Florida has become the third most populous state.**

“To ignore the growing demand for, and the quality of, our supply leaves our state incredibly vulnerable.”

– SPEAKER STEVE CRISAFULLI,
FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Securing Florida's water future is a priority of the Florida Chamber's competitiveness agenda. Florida Chamber members have taken a careful look at Florida's water supply and water quality needs, and have recommended a six point long-term, comprehensive water plan. The Florida Chamber's water plan is focused on science-based solutions to meet the needs of our growing state and to ensure our special quality of life and economic growth are not placed at risk.



Science-based water solutions, and encouraging the use of alternative water supplies like reclaimed water, will help promote sustainable economic growth. Already, Florida is a water conservation leader in the reuse of water. Nearly 719 million gallons per day of reclaimed water were reused for beneficial purposes in 2013. This conservation effort saved an estimated 139 billion gallons of potable quality water, and added more than 85 billion gallons back to available groundwater supplies.

Protecting Florida’s valuable natural resources and addressing water supply challenges that communities experience are important for securing Florida’s water future.



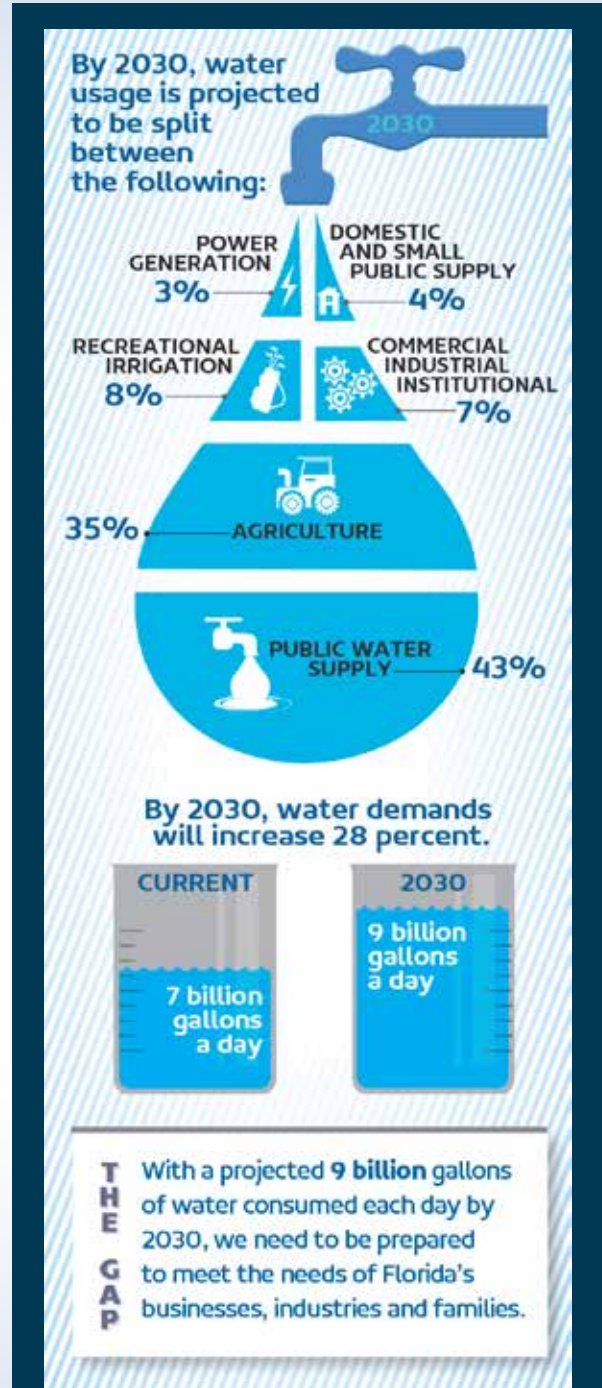
“I believe water is the biggest long-term issue facing Florida. If we don’t have a sustainable, high-quality, affordable source of water to support environmental and economic development initiatives, then Florida as we know it ceases to exist.”

– AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER
ADAM PUTNAM

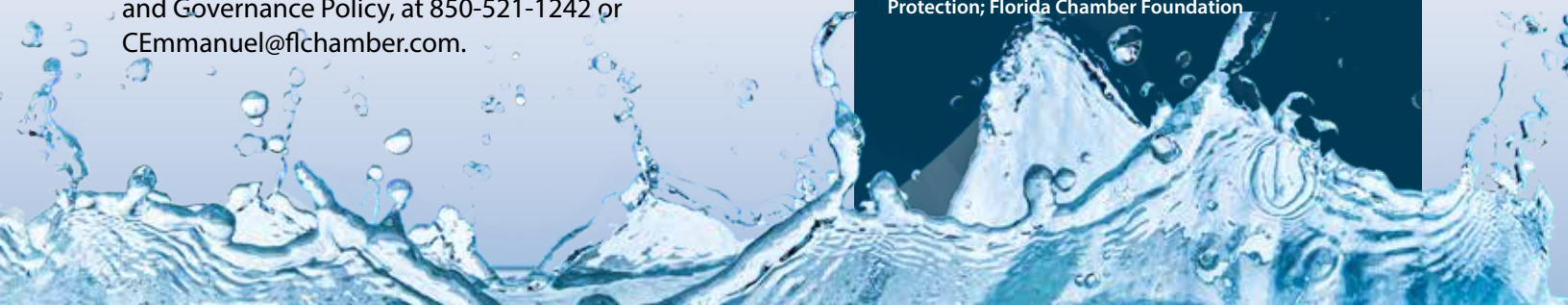
By taking long-term, comprehensive steps now, the Florida Chamber believes a water quality and water supply plan can be put in place to meet Florida’s growing demands, and to help prevent the environmental and economic devastation states like California are experiencing as a result of not being prepared.

HELP SECURE FLORIDA’S WATER FUTURE

Contact Chris Emmanuel, Director of Infrastructure and Governance Policy, at 850-521-1242 or CEmmanuel@flchamber.com.



Sources: Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Florida Chamber Foundation



TO SECURE FLORIDA'S WATER FUTURE, THE FLORIDA CHAMBER RECOMMENDS:

1 IDENTIFY COST-EFFECTIVE PROJECTS

Retooling the regional water supply planning process can help identify cost-effective projects to provide for a sustainable water supply. This would include prioritizing and identifying specific sources to meet particular needs. Regional water supply plans should be transformed into useful tools for identifying water needs for public supply, agriculture, and other water users, gaps in the water resources needed to meet all demands, the cost-effectiveness of projects or programs needed to achieve solutions and the implementation of timelines and budgets.

2 FUND COST-EFFECTIVE WATER PROJECTS

The era of easy, cheap water resource development for public drinking water is drawing to a close. Alternative, and often more costly, water supplies are necessary in many areas due to the scarcity of available groundwater sources. To achieve cost effective funding, Florida should become a leader by:

- ▶ *Providing direct financial assistance to develop regional projects through cost share grants and low interest loan programs.*
- ▶ *Create a State Water Infrastructure Bank (SWIB) similar to the existing revolving loan and credit enhancement program to lend capital or provide credit enhancement for water projects identified in the regional water supply plan or basin management action plan (BMAP).*

3 IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE WATER RESOURCES

This would require the five water management districts to undertake research projects to identify water resources available, both traditional and alternative, for water resource and water supply development. Identifying the water resources would include quantifying the available resource, water quality and permit requirements. The core mission should be to serve as a research and development arm for water suppliers.

4 PROMOTE PRIVATE INVESTMENTS IN SURFACE WATER STORAGE & WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Projects on private lands have proven to be a cost-effective method for both water supply development and water quality treatment. Florida landowners should be encouraged and incentivized to enter partnerships to enable the development of water resources, including:

- ▶ *Surface water storage projects that provide water resource benefits,*
- ▶ *Building reservoirs to capture storm water in times of excess and storing it for times of scarcity,*
- ▶ *Implementing water conservation measures,*
- ▶ *Linking environmental and water supply with flood control needs, and*
- ▶ *Other feasible alternative water supply development.*

5 PROMOTE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY SOLUTIONS

Florida has at times been plagued with "water wars" amongst competing users in areas where water resources are constrained. Policy changes can help limit the potential for competition by promoting collaborative, regional water supply solutions through financial incentives and increase the use of long-term water use permits of 30-50 years when the resource availability can be proven.

6 PRIORITIZE USE OF SCIENCE-BASED REGULATORY PROGRAMS

Florida has established sophisticated, science-based regulatory programs for protecting and restoring water quality and water flow. The implementation of the following programs should be encouraged:

- ▶ *Total maximum daily loads, and minimum flows and levels should be prioritized as a means to restore and protect Florida springs and other high-value waters.*
- ▶ *Innovative programs, such as water quality credit trading and dispersed water storage.*
- ▶ *Cost-share program to convert densely populated septic systems that are causing harm to springs, rivers, and other water sources, should be developed and implemented.*
- ▶ *Investments in research, planning, coordination and water quality project development will also be needed to help Florida respond to the state's water resource challenges while maintaining our economic competitiveness.*

"Florida receives nearly half of its rainfall during the months of June, July and August. While Florida receives more rain than most states, much of our state's rainfall is lost as storm water runoff."

– DR. JERRY PARRISH
CHIEF ECONOMIST
FLORIDA CHAMBER
FOUNDATION

