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Watershed Protection Branch

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**Notice of Informational Meeting Regarding Groundwater Withdrawal Applications for the
Bryan County Mega-Site**

This notice is to announce that the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Watershed Protection Branch will host a meeting to provide information on the technical analysis and modeling assessment of the potential groundwater impacts from the requested groundwater withdrawals for water supply to the Bryan County Mega-Site.

Bulloch County has submitted an application to EPD for two Floridan aquifer wells sited in Bulloch County, asking for up to 3.125 million gallons a day (mgd) on an annual average. Bryan County has submitted an application to EPD for two Floridan aquifer wells sited in Bulloch County, asking for up to 3.500 mgd on an annual average. The cumulative total of 6.625 mgd on an annual average will be used to provide water to the Bryan County Mega-Site.

EPD has run multiple hydrologic models to determine the impacts expected from these Floridan aquifer withdrawals. EPD will present these results and provide a regional overview of the impact on the Floridan aquifer. EPD will also make available an interactive map, which will show the potential modeled impact at specific locations, such as at residential or agricultural wells.

In addition, EPD has prepared draft special conditions for the groundwater withdrawal permits for stakeholder comment. These proposed draft special conditions may be found on the EPD website at: <https://epd.georgia.gov/water-withdrawal-permitting>.

The meeting will be held on:

Meeting DATE: February 26, 2024

Meeting TIME: 6 P.M. to 9 P.M.

Meeting LOCATION: Southeast Bulloch High School, Auditorium

9184 Brooklet-Denmark Highway, Brooklet, Ga 30415

In addition to the meeting, stakeholders may choose to send written comments to EPD. Written comments may be sent to EPDComments@dnr.ga.gov or mailed to Environmental Protection Division, Watershed Protection Branch, Suite 1470A East Tower, 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr., Atlanta, GA 30334. The comment period closes on **Friday, March 8**. Please include the words "Groundwater Applications for Bryan County Mega-Site" in the subject line to help ensure that your comments will be forwarded to the correct staff.

Proposed DRAFT Special Conditions (01/30/2024):

Addressing Short-Term Impacts:

- A) *A joint Bulloch County and Bryan County municipal managed fund will be created by the permitted counties, which may include industrial monetary contributions and assistance, to address any potential unreasonable impacts to existing permitted individual Floridan aquifer residential (permitted by local health departments) or agricultural wells (permitted by EPD) in the nearby area within a 5-mile radius of the I-16 and Highway 119 interchange. This mitigating mechanism will exist for the term (10 years) of this permit.*

- B) *If an EPD approved party conducts an independent investigation which indicates that an unreasonable impact to an existing water well meeting the above parameters is considered to have been caused by the Floridan Aquifer drawdown engendered by the use of the 4 municipal wells providing water to the industries at the Bryan county Mega-Site, money from the fund may be used to indemnify the affected party to solve such delineated water problems. These options may include methods proposed using best management practices of a Georgia licensed well driller, such as resetting the water pump deeper or by other proposed solutions.*

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Addressing Potential Long-Term Impact:

- C) *The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) strongly encourages Bryan County and Bulloch County to work together to expeditiously plan for the timely provision of treated surface water (or other alternatives) and the construction of all infrastructure necessary to deliver sufficient quantities of treated water to northern Bryan County and southern Bulloch County. This provision of treated surface water (or other alternatives) and the construction of all infrastructure necessary should not exceed 25 years. Such planning should be premised on making sufficient surface water (or other alternatives) available to provide for offsetting permitted Floridan aquifer groundwater withdrawals tied to the Bryan County Mega-Site and the future water needs of any additional industrial, commercial, and residential growth which may occur in this area because of Bryan County Mega-Site development.*
- D) *Groundwater withdrawals from the proposed four (4) municipal Floridan Aquifer wells in the Green Zone of Bulloch County must be reduced upon completion and operation of infrastructure to deliver surface water in the area, in coordination and compliance with any contract restrictions placed on the use of the wells by the initial funding source requirements.*
- E) *Any future suggestion to drill new Floridan aquifer wells away from the Savannah Cone of Depression (such as farther west or north) and then transfer or move any already issued permitted groundwater limits must comply with all EPD policy and permitting requirements in place at the time of such a proposal.*
- F) *Bryan County and Bulloch County must submit an initial joint annual report to EPD within 12 months of the withdrawal permits being issued, informing EPD of the pending status regarding:*

1. *The investigation of, and discovery or development of, sufficient funding sources to pay for any effort to expand surface water availability in a timely manner.*
 2. *All negotiations between the above parties and any others working towards the construction of necessary surface water and pipeline infrastructure.*
 3. *Contractual documents between the parties proposed or approved.*
 4. *A solid, firm and feasible front-loaded timetable for such developments,*
 5. *Any other information pertaining to this effort.*
- G) *Bryan County and Bulloch County must also submit annual updates to the initial report, which must at a minimum address each of the five items above, summarizing progress and providing any new information available. As significant progress, changes in conditions, or changes in timelines may occur, the level of detail provided in the annual reporting should be sufficient to appropriately inform EPD of the project status. Three years after the initial report and every three years thereafter, Bryan County and Bulloch County must submit an updated report summarizing all progress taking place and setting goals and milestones to be achieved in the next three-year period.*
