ALABAMA'S WATER RESOURCES POLICY

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STATE OF ALABAMA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

MONTGOMERY

April 2, 1973

To the Citizens of Alabama:

I am pleased to submit this statement of the State's Water Resources Policy as the official guide for the orderly and systematic development of its most valuable resource.

Alabama is one of the most favored states in regard to the availability of water resources of good quality. The flow of Alabama's streams is about 8 percent of the Nation's streamflow, and we are blessed with excellent ground-water resources beneath most of the State. Our rivers and lakes provide excellent inland water transportation and large quantities of electric power, they provide recreational opportunities and wholesome water supplies, and their presence enhances the beauty of the State.

This Water Resources Policy reflects the State's goals to maintain and improve the quality of the total environment through judicious use of its water resources. It is time that we as citizens of Alabama take cognizance of our abundant natural resource and endeavor to utilize it to its fullest for the benefit of this and future generations.

We invite your comments and suggestions as we institute further study, planning and action to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

George C. Wallace

George C. Wallace
Governor

STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

George C. Wallace
Governor

R. C. "Red" Bamberg
Director

W. M. "Bill" Rushton
Assistant Director

March 30, 1973

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NOAA
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The Honorable George C. Wallace
Governor, State of Alabama
Capitol Building
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Dear Governor Wallace:

I have the honor of transmitting for your approval this statement of the Water Resources Policy for the State of Alabama. This policy statement was prepared under the direction of the Alabama Development Office with funding from the State Legislature and a Federal grant from the Water Resources Council under the State Planning Program authorized by Title III of the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965 as amended.

In recent years, increased demands placed upon our water resources by expanding population and increased development of the State along with an awakening of environmental considerations have made the citizens of the State aware of our valuable resource. To utilize that resource effectively for the benefit of all citizens of Alabama, it is essential to have a guiding policy. This publication provides the first official statement of the policy.

Sincerely,

R. C. "Red" Bamberg
Director

RCB:1

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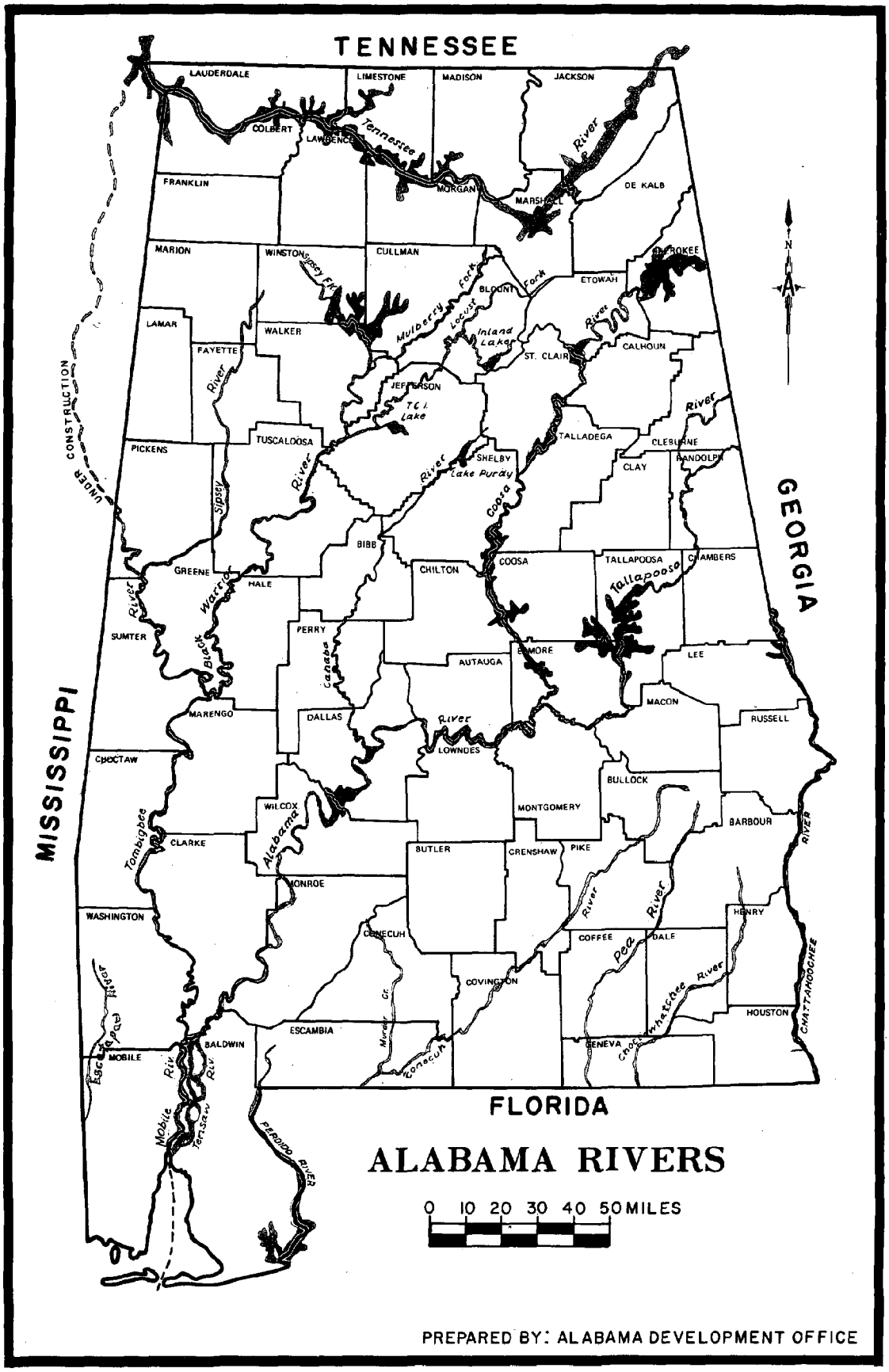
STATE OF ALABAMA



ALABAMA RIVERS

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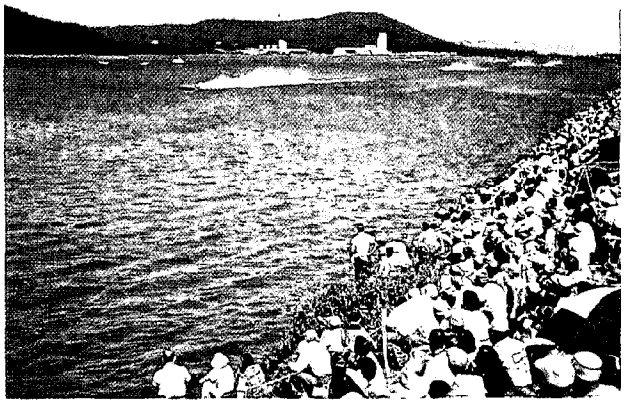
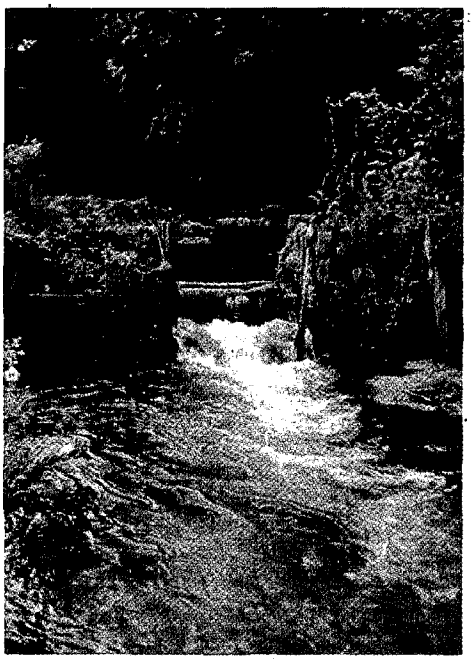


CLEAN WATER FOR ALABAMA

Good water in adequate quantities is essential to Alabama's achievement and maintenance of a total environment of superior quality.

We need water for an almost endless variety of uses. All life depends on it. We need water for drinking, for cooking, for bathing, and for cleanliness of our homes, schools and businesses.



We need water for our farms, for industries, for the generation of electric power, for navigation, and for use in waste disposal.

We need water for recreation, for improving fish and wildlife values, and for the enjoyment of the beauty that streams and lakes give to the landscape.

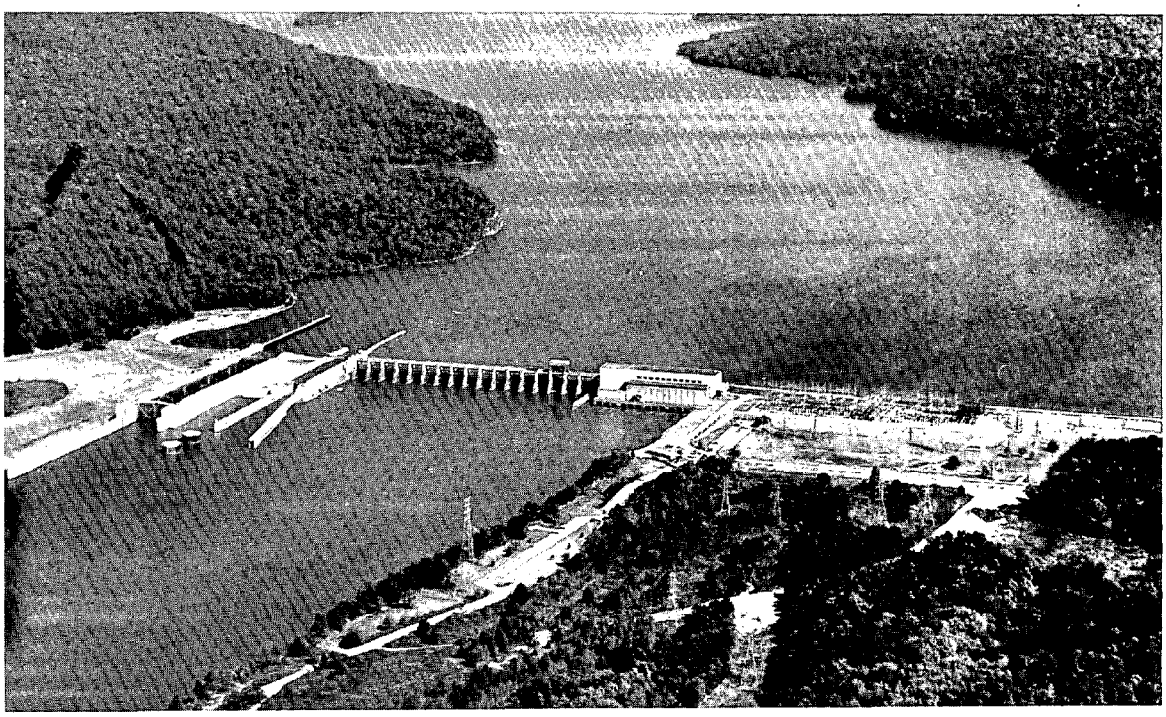
Alabamians are fortunate in having an abundance of water. On the surface of the ground countless rivers, creeks, and other small streams, along with natural and man-made lakes and ponds, provide for many needs. Underground we have quantities of water which far exceed the total volume of our surface waters.

MANAGING WATER RESOURCES

Our State generally has a plentiful supply of water for all necessary and beneficial uses. This will be the case for many, many years - provided we plan, develop, and manage our water resources wisely.

We use a variety of means to manage water resources. For example, we build dams to control floods, to store water for recreational use, and for release to increase stream flows to improve water quality. We strive to prevent and reduce water pollution and thus to increase our usable supplies of water.

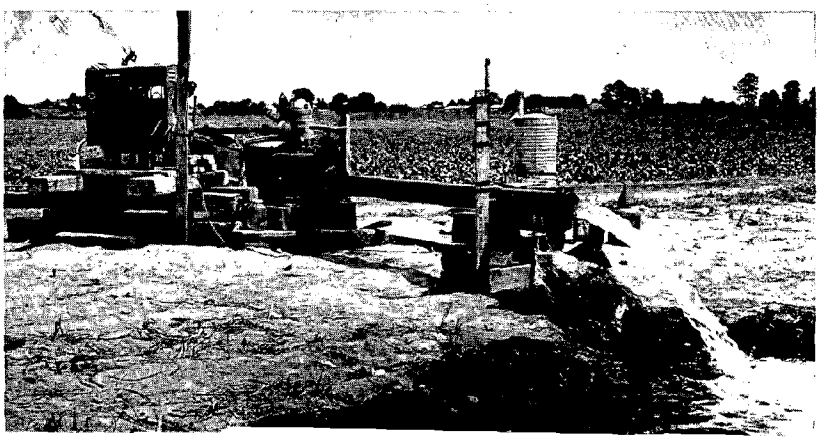
While State government has only a limited role in the construction of projects aimed at carrying out these and other purposes, it does exercise strong leadership in activities related to the elements of good water resources planning.

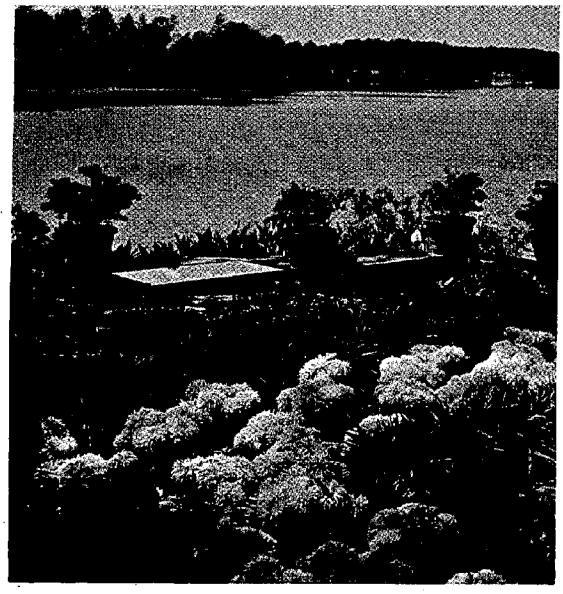


POLICY FOR PUBLIC WATERS OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Water-resources policy and planning objectives are intimately related to each other and to the public interest. Policy is a statement of intention--a guide to decisions based upon a considered appraisal of the present and future needs. Planning objectives are proposals for actions based upon identical considerations--thus objectives should direct both private and public efforts toward resource utilization in the best interests of the people of the State.

The policy of the State of Alabama is to bring about the systematic and coordinated development of Alabama's human, and natural resources. Water and the related lands comprise the primary segment of the State's natural wealth which is of great importance to the future economic growth and well-being of its people. Policies for development of these resources will have a profound effect upon Alabama's ability to meet the challenges of the future. For that reason, it is essential to define the policy that will guide the planning process in achieving the proper development and management of public water and related land resources.





THE POLICY

It is the BASIC WATER RESOURCES POLICY of the State of Alabama that the total water resources of the State shall be conserved, developed, and used for the maximum benefit of all people of the State, both now and in the future and that the development of the water and related land resources shall complement and be compatible with the development plan for the total resources of the State.

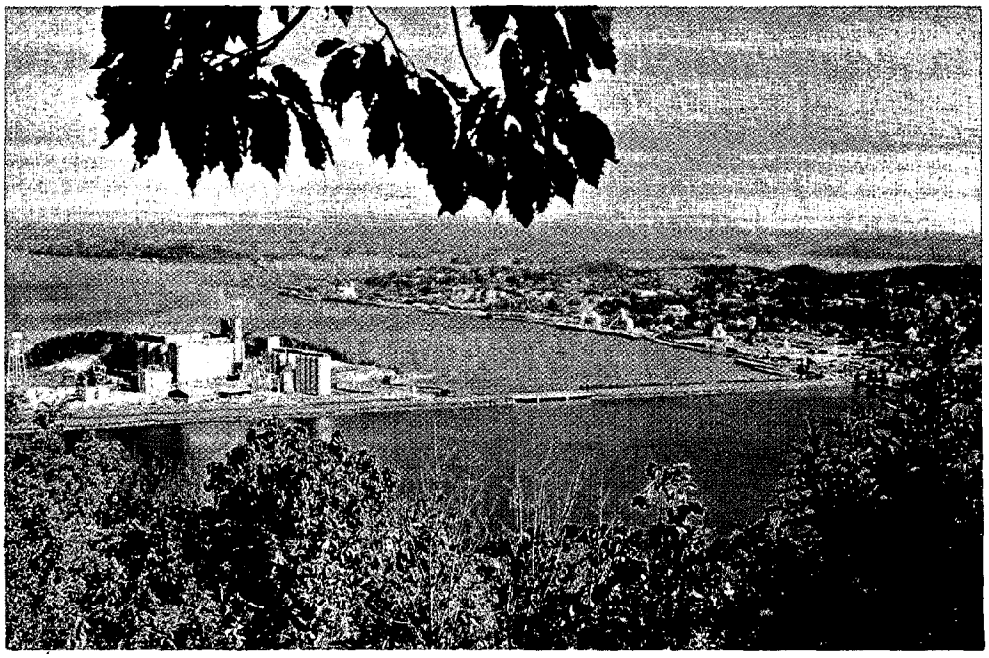
In recognition that comprehensive planning must precede competent management, there shall be a plan of development for the water resources of the State prepared with the public interest in mind, and there shall be purposeful development in accordance therewith under the guidance and management of the State.

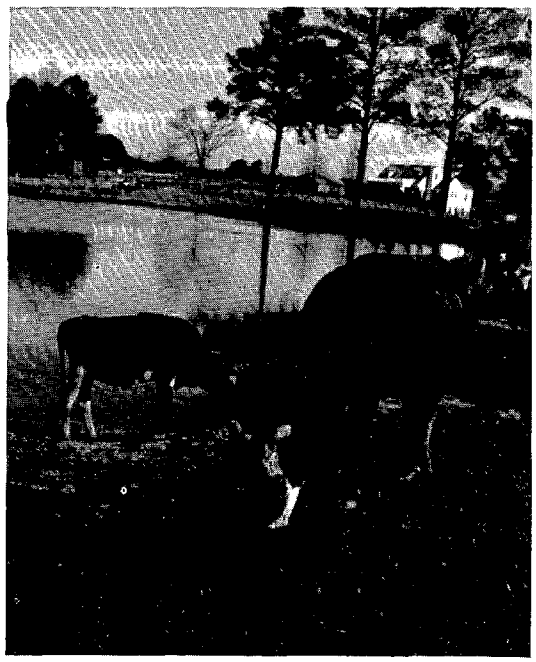
In the comprehensive planning process, concerned departments of State and local government and the public at-large will be informed of proposed plans and will be afforded participation in the decision-making process.

Concomitant with National goals and objectives, it is the policy of the State of Alabama that, insofar as possible, the development of its water resources shall complement any plans and actions directed toward the enhancement of the natural environment. To this end, plans for public water resources development shall be considered with a view to their effect upon the State's other natural and cultural resources and its ecological systems.

The State of Alabama will take cognizance of Federal and local programs for public water and related land resources and will coordinate State activities with appropriate programs to improve the economic conditions within the State and of its citizens in conformity with the State's comprehensive planning program.

The State of Alabama will participate in arrangements for the planning, management, and development of interstate waters provided such arrangements are conformable with State public water resources development plans and with interests of the citizens of the State and the Nation.





It is the policy of the State of Alabama that public necessity for water and for its development shall be pre-eminent over private interests and that, insofar as is practicable, development shall be commensurate with local needs and desires. Local units of government shall share, to the extent of their ability, in the cost of development of local public water resources projects.

Local public water needs shall ordinarily be satisfied from local sources before the transfer of public waters from one area or basin to another within the State or across its boundaries is undertaken, but overall public welfare and necessity shall predominate over considerations of this nature.

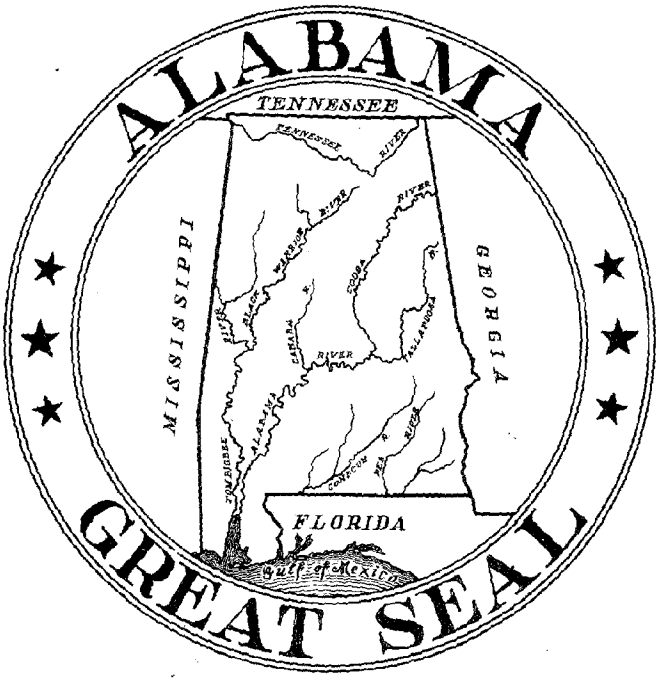
It is the policy of the State of Alabama to develop and maintain an adequate legal structure for the effective development and efficient management of the public water resources of the State; to seek statutory authority to control the withdrawal and use of public water resources in a manner that will best promote the health, safety, convenience, prosperity and welfare of the people of the State; and to improve the efficiency of planning and management of its public water and related land resources by restructuring, as may be necessary, institutional arrangements to attain the goals and objectives of the State in water resources development.

It is the policy of the State of Alabama to direct its public water resources planning activities and efforts toward the implementation of plans, projects, and procedures that will be of early applicability in the enhancement of the quality of the environment, in the promotion of regional economic growth and National economic efficiency, and in the improvement of the quality of life and social well-being of the citizens of Alabama.

THE FUTURE

While much has been accomplished through individual and governmental efforts, much more remains to be done. A growing population, an expanding economy, and increasing urbanization make it continually more difficult to properly develop and manage our water resources.

In future years, the problems of water resources management will become increasingly difficult as new and enlarged uses tax our resource. However, with adequate and farsighted water resources policy, supported by proper planning, implementation and management we will be able to meet the challenge of providing a total environment of superior quality for all citizens of Alabama. Accomplishment of this objective will require the cooperation of all levels of government, of industry and business, and of the public at large. The job is one in which we must succeed.



Alabama Development Office

Montgomery, Alabama

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