

House Bill 1281 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives England of the 108th, McCall of the 30th, Roberts of the 154th, Hanner of the 148th, Ehrhart of the 36th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Chapter 5 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to water resources, so as to prohibit local government restrictions on outdoor water use during periods of drought that are more restrictive than those imposed by the state without certain approval; to provide that political subdivisions may be exempted from outdoor watering restrictions imposed by the state; to prohibit placing certain restrictions on use of surface water for swimming pools; to prohibit placing certain restrictions on use of ground water for swimming pools; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Chapter 5 of Title 12 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to water resources, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

"12-5-7.

(a) No political subdivision of this state or local government authority shall impose more stringent restrictions on outdoor water use during periods of drought than those applicable restrictions, if any, imposed by the state unless approved by the director of the Environmental Protection Division of the department.

(b) Any political subdivision of this state or local government authority may, upon application to and approval by the director of the Environmental Protection Division of the department for good cause shown, be exempted from outdoor watering restrictions imposed by the state.

(c) The director shall render a decision on an application made by a political subdivision or local government authority under subsection (a) or (b) of this Code section within three business days after receipt thereof."

SECTION 2.

Said chapter is further amended in subsection (l) of Code Section 12-5-31, relating to permits for withdrawal, diversion, or impoundment of surface waters generally and for farm uses and monitoring, recording, and reporting water withdrawals, by deleting "and" at the end of paragraph (4) and adding a new paragraph to read as follows:

"(4.1) Except when necessary to provide sufficient water for uses listed in paragraphs (3) and (4) of this subsection during an emergency period of water shortage, the director shall not restrict the use of surface water for public, private, or community swimming pools solely due to drought or water shortage; and"

SECTION 3.

Said chapter is further amended in Code Section 12-5-102, relating to emergency orders, hearing, and appeal, by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

"(e) Except when necessary to provide sufficient water for uses listed in subsections (c) and (d) of this Code section during an emergency period of water shortage, the director shall not restrict the use of ground water for public, private, or community swimming pools solely due to drought or water shortage."

SECTION 4.

This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SECTION 5.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.