



KNOW YOUR FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Matthew M. Carter II, Commissioner

WATER CONSERVATION

Florida has an abundant supply of water. Nature has blessed Florida with long, sparkling coastlines and many rivers and lakes which attract tourists and newcomers at a dizzying rate. However, much of that water requires significant treatment to meet health and safety standards. This is especially true near the coasts so attractive to tourists and new residents. Consequently, the amount of water in Florida readily available for consumption by the largest population areas is limited. Understandably, water conservation is an extremely important issue here, and as more residents and tourists arrive, the issue becomes more important daily.

In order to meet residents' needs, coastal cities must obtain additional bulk water by tapping into inland water supplies or must conserve existing supplies by using alternative sources for irrigation and industrial uses. Both options can be expensive and tend to drive up the cost of water delivered to the homes of residential customers. That means higher monthly bills!

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC), is responsible for the economic regulation of many of the water and wastewater utilities providing service to your homes. Currently, the agency regulates investor owned water and wastewater companies in 36 Florida counties. Despite the fact that the PSC regulates investor owned water and wastewater companies in more than half of Florida's counties, the bulk of Florida's population is served by municipal or county owned utilities regulated by their respective local governments.

To assist in Florida's water conservation efforts, the PSC has worked closely with the state's Water Management Districts and Department of Environmental Protection toward developing a statewide water conservation plan.

As a member of the PSC, I help formulate policies concerning water conservation, and work to stem the rising costs of water due to federal and state regulations. Abundant, affordable, and clean drinking water is essential to the general and economic welfare of Florida's residents, and is therefore one of the most critical issues facing policy makers in Florida.

Managing the demands on our resources by balancing consumption needs against environmental preservation needs is challenging, but I and my colleagues are always working to strike the best possible medium. Information provided by scientists and engineers through new technology helps government and industry in Florida avoid many of the problems experienced in other states and other nations. As consumers, you can also do your part to help conserve water supplies and to help keep costs low for yourselves and your neighbors by heeding the tips provided here.

To learn what other steps you can take to conserve water, please contact your local Water Management District, or contact the PSC at **1-800-342-3552** for a free copy of our *Conserve Your World* brochure (available in English and in Spanish). This informative brochure outlines ways to conserve water and energy in and around your home. You may also contact the agency via e-mail at: contact@psc.state.fl.us, or visit the PSC's Internet Home Page at www.floridapsc.com.

CONSERVATION TIPS

As part of an ongoing effort to inform you of ways to reduce your water cost and preserve our state's precious natural resources, the PSC suggests the following tips to help you conserve water inside and outside the home:

- ✓ Never pour water down the drain when there may be another use for it such as watering a plant or garden, or cleaning.
- ✓ Take shorter showers and shallow baths.
- ✓ Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Try to defrost foods overnight in the refrigerator or by using the defrost setting on your microwave.
- ✓ Store drinking water in the refrigerator rather than letting the tap run every time you want a cool glass of water.
- ✓ Make sure your home is leak-free. Check your water meter a few hours before and after a time when you are certain that no water is being used. If the meter reading changed, you may have a leak.
- ✓ Retrofit all of the faucets in your home by installing aerators with flow restrictors.
- ✓ Rinse your dishes in a sink full of water or by pouring water over them all at once rather than leaving the faucet running.
- ✓ Many plants sold in Florida have a xeriscape tag. Try to use these plants and trees when designing a landscape. Drought-tolerant turfs are also available and local nurseries are usually happy to advise customers on which plants and trees are efficient and grow well in the area.
- ✓ Use mulch in plant beds to control weeds and retain moisture.
- ✓ Install a toilet dam or displacement device such as a bag, bottle, or brick to cut down on the amount of water needed for each flushing.
- ✓ Test for a leaking toilet by adding food coloring to the tank. If the color appears in the bowl after 30 minutes, your toilet is leaking. Leaking toilets can waste up to 200 gallons of water a day.
- ✓ Wash only full loads in your automatic dishwashers and washing machines.
- ✓ Turn off the tap! Don't let the hot water tap run unnecessarily while you wash, shave, or brush your teeth.
- ✓ Consider installing an instant water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to let the water run while it heats up. This will reduce water heating and water usage costs for your household.