



Memorandum

DATE: March 12, 2009
TO: Board of Directors, Tampa Bay Water
FROM: Gerald J. Seeber, General Manager *Gerald J. Seeber*
SUBJECT: Surface Water Availability

As reported to you over the past several months, the ongoing drought has severely impacted surface water availability in the region. Tampa Bay Water began using surface water stored in the Regional Reservoir in late September, about five months earlier than we would have expected under normal hydrologic conditions. Tampa Bay Water has continued to meet the public's daily water demand through these very dry conditions and we have now depleted our useable reservoir storage.

With no reservoir water remaining for the season and the continuing rainfall deficit causing low river flows, today we shut down our surface water treatment system. Since reservoir storage is exhausted, these facilities will remain off-line until surface water can once again be harvested from the Alafia River and the Tampa Bypass Canal in quantities sufficient to restart and sustain the treatment processes. This is not expected to occur until substantial rainfall returns to the region and flows in the Alafia River and the Tampa Bypass Canal increase to near normal levels. Hence, the plant may be off for months.

With no surface water available, Tampa Bay Water must rely on groundwater and the region's desalination plant to meet the public's needs. Recognizing that regional surface water supplies would soon be depleted, on March 5, 2009, we requested authorization from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) to continue withdrawals from the 11 regional wellfields beyond the permit limit in order to meet the drinking water needs of our member governments. We have not yet received the District's response.

Tampa Bay Water is working with the District and with your staff at the six member governments to increase conservation messaging and to encourage the wise use of water. We are appreciative of your conservation steps taken over the past several months and we know that you will continue helping us to work through this critical shortage during the spring dry season.

cc: Member Government Utility Directors