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## **Lake Lanier Association Supports Concept of Forsyth Water Treatment Facility**

Gainesville – in response to the announcement that Forsyth County is planning to site a new water treatment facility in North Forsyth County, the Lake Lanier Association has been responding individually to citizens that express concerns about the facility. In an effort to create more education and awareness about the association's stance on the proposed treatment facility, they have released this statement:

“We have been aware, for several years now, of the proposed plant in North Forsyth and are watching it to see what develops in the Environmental Protection Division permitting process. From a Lake Lanier Association perspective, we will weigh in on the water quality in the lake aspect of this issue, not the property value, placement, or property rights off the lake aspect” said Joanna Cloud, Executive Director for the association.

Lake Lanier Association is very supportive of municipalities around the lake increasing their water returns to the lake. Cloud says “Many people consider the treated water coming back into the lake as treated to such a high standard that it is actually cleaner than the water being pulled out at the intake facilities for drinking water. We have water returns above Buford Dam of only about 50% for water pulled out of Lake Lanier. We can do better. Metro Atlanta has returns approaching 80% for water pulled out of the Chattahoochee. If we want to keep Lake Lanier at higher lake levels, especially during peak summer season, recycling water and increasing our returns is part of that solution.”

The association says it will be monitoring the TMDL permit levels for the treated water as well as the discharge pipe length and depth when the plant is in the state permitting process. Cloud says, especially in areas of North Forsyth with significant agriculture and livestock, along with a higher concentration of aging septic systems, that the concern for bacteria in a Lake Lanier tributary after a significant rainfall event would likely decrease with the addition of a treated water discharge facility due to the treated water diluting the bacteria coming in due to run off. The physical location of the discharge pipe will also be of significant interest to the association in that there are already discharge permits issued in several other locations around the lake and the association is concerned about overburdening the ecosystem of any particular tributary. “Even if we can get comfortable with TMDL standards of multiple discharge permits in a single area, doubling the concerns about things like incoming water temperature or air content in the discharge make having multiple permits in single tributary challenging” says Cloud. There is already one industrial water discharge permit in the Six Mile tributary of Lake Lanier in the North Forsyth area.

The association also says it is in favor of sewer facilities over septic facilities because with sewer, especially municipality systems as opposed to private systems, there are more controls in place to prevent issues and more resources for mitigation if a problem does occur than with private septic systems surrounding the lake.

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