For Release: June 29, 2011

STATEMENT REGARDING 11TH CIRCUIT COURT'S WATER RULING
Mayor Boyd Austin, Chairman, Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

More than 3 million residents in Metro Atlanta, joined by the rest of Georgia, have reason to celebrate today. The threat of Judge Paul Magnuson's ruling to our water supply is gone. Yesterday, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district court ruling and declared that water supply is indeed an authorized purpose of Lake Lanier.

The court has given the Corps of Engineers one year to come up with a plan that includes water supply for metro Atlanta and balances water supply with other uses such as hydropower and flood control.

The Metro Water District is mindful that the waters we depend on are shared resources. That is why the district embarked some 10 years ago on an aggressive water conservation program that we have strengthened over intervening years. Through the Metro Water District, more than 100 jurisdictions are working together to implement the most comprehensive water conservation program in the country.

That work is paying off. While the region grew by a million people in the past decade, per capita water use actually decreased by 14 percent. Going forward, the Metro Water District must continue to plan for the future water supply needs of our region, and we remain committed to being good stewards.

Even though we can claim victory as a result of yesterday's ruling, it remains in the best interests of all for Georgia, Florida and Alabama to craft a water-sharing agreement that considers all stakeholders of the basin. The Metro Water District supports Governor Deal as he continues to negotiate with his fellow governors, and we stand ready to work with all stakeholders in Georgia and our neighbors.

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For more information, contact:
Grace Trimble
404-463-3192 or cell 404-323-5647
gtrimble@atlantaregional.com