

Moore's Public Water System Improvement Plan

A common sense approach to the drought

Treasurer Moore's history of working with local governments through the Local Government Commission provides him a unique understanding of how to work cooperatively with cities and counties to address their infrastructure needs, from school construction to water systems. As governor, he will use this cooperative approach to improve water systems across the state.

According to the N.C. Rural Center's Water 2030 report, public water systems lose more than 35 billion gallons or 11 percent of treated water each year due to leaks, unmetered connections, and other situations. This is enough water to supply the entire Charlotte-Mecklenburg region for a year. Yet less than a third of all systems have a regular leak detection program and only a quarter have conducted even a single leak detection study. Thirty-seven public water systems report they cannot account for over 30% of their expended water.

Richard Moore's administration will partner with our public water systems most in need to conduct a water loss audit and make the most cost effective improvements to cut their water loss. These include adjusting water system pressure, replacing meter sizes, creating an active leak detection program, revising system flushing programs, and improving communication within different departments to reduce water loss.

Identifying and stopping water loss in our public water systems is an easy first step in addressing the drought. But there are a number of other steps we should take:

- As North Carolina continues to grow, steps to improve conservation and reduce per capita water use are imperative. This should include changes to the pricing structure of water that will discourage overuse and reward conservation. Increasing conservation should guide all of our policy decisions.
- We need a better understanding of the water resources we have and how we are using them. Guidelines for reporting water use should be strengthened.
- The drilling of private wells and the level of our aquifers must be better managed.
- Many other states, particularly out West, have been dealing with limited water resources for a long time. Their water management policies, regulatory framework, and regional water planning is generally stronger than ours. We should tap the expertise that exists around the country to help us develop a comprehensive water plan.