

July 15, 2020



**FROM THE DESK OF  
COMMISSIONER  
BRENT BAILEY  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OFFICE**



*The Central District is pleased to bring you the latest information concerning utility rates, project developments, Public Service Commission actions and other news you can use. I hope you will find this information to be a useful resource to learn about the Public Service Commission, consumer issues and the continuous work we are doing for the citizens in the Central District and across the state of Mississippi. Thank you again for allowing me to serve you in this capacity.*

*Brent Bailey*

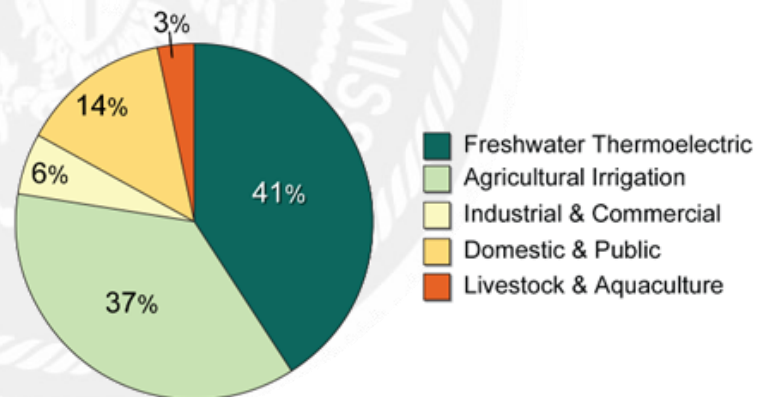
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## **Fresh Water: Managing a Critical Resource**

**T**emporarily losing any utility service is an inconvenience. Be it electricity, natural gas or water, we have come to depend on these services and resources for our health and economic prosperity. However, many would agree that nothing is as essential as access to fresh, drinking water.

Science class taught us that 70% of the earth is covered in water, but only 3% is fresh and drinkable. 80% of the 3% is frozen on polar ice caps and glaciers, leaving us with access to only 1% of our planet's fresh water. And competition for that fresh water can be robust among the major use sectors: public supply, household, industrial, commercial, power generation, aquaculture and irrigation.

**Freshwater Withdrawals by Sector**



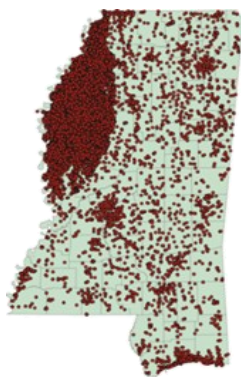
Multiple agencies have the responsibility for managing the quantity, safety, access and affordability of clean water in Mississippi. The [MDEQ-Office of Land and Water Resources](#) is charged with conserving, managing, and protecting the water resources of Mississippi. The agency regulates water quantity issues ensuring the beneficial use of these resources is in the best interest and welfare of the citizens of the state. Part of its duty is issuing permits for groundwater and surface water withdrawals.

The State of Mississippi uses about 3.5 billion gallons of water every day. Only one-fourth of that comes from surface water like lakes or reservoirs. The other 2.6 billion gallons comes from groundwater: rainfall that has traveled through soil and miles of underground sand deposits to the water wells that pull the water back to the surface.



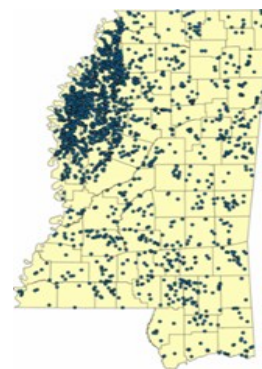
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Currently, there are approximately 23,000 active groundwater withdrawal permits in Mississippi. 80% of those are in the Delta primarily for agriculture and wildlife use. The other 20% is spread across the rest of the state.



Active Groundwater  
Withdrawal Permits

There are nearly 2,600 active surface water withdrawal permits in the state. 1,800 are in the Delta mostly for agriculture and wildlife. 800 throughout the rest of the state. Mississippi has 86,000 miles of rivers and streams from which to pull water from.



Active Surface Water  
Withdrawal Permits

The Mississippi State Department of Health's (MSDH) [Public Water Supply Program](#) ensures safe drinking water to the 2.9 million citizens of Mississippi who utilize the state's public water supplies by enforcing the requirements of the Federal and State Safe Drinking Water Acts. The MSDH regulates approximately 1,000 community, 75 non-transient and 75 transient water systems. MSDH defines Community as residential and

commercial; Non-community non transient serves the same people each day (such as a factory); and Non-community transient serves different people each day (such as a highway rest area). The MSDH tests the water from these systems regularly, inspects the systems, and ensures compliance with drinking water quality standards.

The [MS Public Utilities Staff](#) investigates all water filings before the MS Public Service Commission and makes recommendations thereon. Filings reviewed include applications for construction of facilities, applications to serve customers, and notices to revise the rates and charges authorized by the Commission. Other activities include auditing and examining customer service practices of water utilities. In addition, the Staff reviews and makes utility viability determinations for the MS State Department of Health regarding new public water systems. Public water systems include, but are not limited to, rural water associations, municipal water utilities, water districts, for-profit water companies, etc.

While having no regulatory authority, the [Mississippi Rural Water Association](#) (MRWA) provides training and technical assistance to water system operators around the state and performs some technical services. The MRWA is the state's largest water and wastewater utility membership organization with 1,057 member utilities.

Responsible management of our water resources is important for continued population and economic growth in Mississippi. With the current public health emergency, safe, abundant, affordable water is key to good personal hygiene and maintaining a safe home or workplace. Water also provides us energy and keeps our bodies functioning properly. Common-sense regulations and the agencies that enforce them are critical to ensuring that we have adequate supplies of fresh water. It is a team effort and I appreciate the work of those unheralded operators and technicians across the state who keep clean water flowing to our taps.





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## CONNECT *Mississippi*

I would like to take a moment to introduce to you the four individuals who will be representing the Central District on the Connect Mississippi Committee. We appreciate their commitments of their time and efforts to helping expand a critical need for internet connectivity across Mississippi.

Please note that we value everyone's input and we will be happy to collect and forward any information and recommendations to the full Committee. Please email your submissions to [Rachael.Ring@psc.ms.gov](mailto:Rachael.Ring@psc.ms.gov).



**Greg Hall** is currently the Director of Information Technology with the Center for Telehealth at the University of Mississippi Medical Center where he has worked for the past 20 years. He helped to establish TelEmergency, a telehealth program that supports rural Emergency Departments across the state of Mississippi that saw its first patient in 2003. The TelEmergency program currently supports 20 rural hospitals throughout the state. He also helps to establish new telehealth programs across the university by establishing the technology workflow for those telehealth programs. Many of the programs established by the Center are utilized in rural Mississippi.



**Greg Hayman** is the CEO at TecInfo Communications, LLC, a facilities based Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (CLEC) serving Mississippi with telephone, voice and data services, including high capacity fiber and wireless. TecInfo, started in 1995 based in Leland in Washington County, has twice been awarded the Governor's Cup in recognition of its significant impacts within the community.



**Mike McCormick**, a cow/calf and timber farmer from Jefferson County, is the 10th president of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. He is a member of the Federal Communication Commission's Precision Agriculture Task Force and chairs a subcommittee focused on the connectivity needs and adoption of precision ag technology and job creation in precision agriculture.



**Dr. Ronnie McGehee** currently serves as the Executive Director for the Mississippi Association of School Administrators. He has been the Vice-President and President of MASA, a Governing Board Member of the National Association of School Administrators and has been named Administrator of the Year by both Herff-Jones and Madison County. Upon his retirement from Madison County Schools in 2018, Dr. McGehee has continued to serve the state of Mississippi as the Executive Director for the Mississippi Association of Secondary School Principals.



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## LAST WEEK *at the* MPSC

In Lauderdale County, Toomsba Water Association and Russell Utilities filed a [joint petition](#) to request part of Toomsba's certificated area be transferred to Russell Utilities. The area to be transferred serves approximately six (6) customers.

Entergy Mississippi has filed an [application](#) asking the Commission to authorize amortization of \$22.2 million in other post-employment benefit (OPEB) assets over five years through the Formula Rate Plan. OPEBs are non-pension, post-retirement benefits paid to eligible retirees for retiree medical, dental, vision and life benefits. Entergy also filed an [application](#) to defer the expense portion of qualified pension settlement charges. Entergy anticipates that a significant number of retirement participants may elect lump-sum distributions in 2020, potentially reaching the settlement accounting threshold and causing an increase in pension expense.

Atmos Energy filed a [Construction Notice](#) to replace mains and service lines in the Fondren neighborhood in Jackson, MS. Approximately 13,000 feet of HDPE main will replace existing steel mains and approximately 163 new service lines will be installed to replace legacy service lines and improve system integrity. Total estimated project cost is \$1.78 million.

Entergy Mississippi filed a [Construction Notice](#) of its intent to add a second transformer at the Ruleville Substation in Sunflower County to enhance reliability by improving distribution load serving capabilities and reducing distribution load at risk. The addition of a second transformer would mitigate the possibility of an extended outage caused by the loss of the existing transformer. Anticipated project cost is \$4.89 million. 1,845 Entergy Mississippi customers are served from the Ruleville Substation.

Entergy Mississippi filed a [Construction Notice](#) of its intent to add a second transformer at the Flora Substation in Madison County to enhance reliability and growth opportunities. The addition of a second transformer would mitigate the possibility of an extended outage caused by the loss of the existing transformer. 3,500 Entergy Mississippi customers are served by the Flora Substation. Anticipated project cost is \$9.23 million.

CenterPoint Energy filed its [Energy Efficiency Cost Recovery \(EECR\) Rider Compliance Tariff](#) per the MPSC's [Order](#) approving rate adjustments dated July 7, 2020.

Atmos Energy filed its [Annual System Integrity Rider Compliance Tariff Filing](#) and other supporting schedules in support of the Stable/Rate filing. Atmos hopes to implement updated rates on Nov. 1.

Mississippi Power Co. [filed](#) for a third extension to submit revisions to its PEP compliance filing.

Advanced Energy Management Alliance filed its [comments and recommendations](#) in response to Entergy Mississippi's initial Stakeholder Workshop pursuant to the development of EML's Integrated Resource Plan.

MCImetro Access Transmission Services d/b/s Verizon filed a petition for 40 contiguous telephone numbers for Morgan Stanley Service call center in Madison, MS. Verizon's initial request to the Pooling Administrator was denied. [Verizon requests the MPSC](#) to overturn the denial.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **17** complaints in the Central District.

Telecommunications	9
Electric Companies	8

Last week, the Central District received a total of **129** complaints from consumers against potential telemarketers through our no call app, website and mail-ins. The top three general issues reported by consumers are related to auto warranties, credit cards, and insurance.

**We encourage consumers to file telemarketing complaints with the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.donotcall.gov/> in addition to filing complaints with the Mississippi Public Service Commission.**