151.110 Water resources policy -- Duties of cabinet.

(1) (a) The conservation, development, and proper use of the water resources of the Commonwealth of Kentucky have become of vital importance as a result of population expansion and concentration, industrial growth, technological advances, and an ever increasing demand for water for varied domestic, industrial, municipal, and recreational uses. It is recognized by the General Assembly that excessive rainfall during certain seasons of the year causes damage from overflowing streams. However, prolonged droughts at other seasons curtail industrial, municipal, agricultural, and recreational uses of water and seriously threaten the continued growth and economic well-being of the Commonwealth. The advancement of the safety, happiness, and welfare of the people and the protection of property require that the power inherent in the people be utilized to promote and to regulate the conservation, development, and most beneficial use of the water resources. It is hereby declared that the general welfare requires that the water resources of the Commonwealth be put to the beneficial use to the fullest extent of which they are capable, that the waste or nonbeneficial use of water be prevented, and that the conservation and beneficial use of water be exercised in the interest of the people. Therefore, it is declared the policy of the Commonwealth to actively encourage and to provide financial, technical, or other support for projects that will control and store our water resources in order that the continued growth and development of the Commonwealth might be assured. To that end, it is declared to be the purpose of KRS Chapters 146, 149, 151, 224, 262, and KRS 350.029 and 433.750 to 433.757 for the Commonwealth to permit, regulate, and participate in the construction or financing of facilities to store surplus surface water for future use; to conserve and develop the ground water resources of the Commonwealth; to require local communities to develop long range water supply plans; to protect the rights of all persons equitably and reasonably interested in the use and availability of water; to prohibit the pollution of water resources and to maintain the normal flow of all streams so that the proper quantity and quality of water will be available at all times to the people of the Commonwealth; to provide for the adequate disposition of water among the people of the Commonwealth entitled to its use during severe droughts or times of emergency; to prevent harmful overflows and flooding; to regulate the construction, maintenance, and operation of all dams and other barriers of streams; to prevent the obstruction of streams and floodways by the dumping of substances therein; to keep accurate records on the amount of water withdrawal from streams and watercourses and reasonably regulate the amount of withdrawal of public water; and to engage in other activities as may be necessary to conserve and develop the water resources of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and to ensure adequate supply of water for domestic, agricultural, recreational, and economic development uses.

(b) The cabinet shall:

1. Provide leadership in water use efficiency for all water uses;

2. Promote conservation;
3. Offer technical assistance and conduct research;
4. Be the lead agency with other state and local agencies to incorporate conservation measures and incentives into their programs;
5. Sponsor "technology transfer sessions" on water conservation to commercial and industrial operations; and
6. Provide leadership to communities looking for information and methods for coping with the issues of growth and water supply.

(c) Subsection (1)(b) shall not be construed as changing the relationship between the cabinet and the Kentucky River Authority and their respective responsibilities for oversight of the Kentucky River as set out in KRS 151.700 and 151.720.

(2) It is a finding of the General Assembly that groundwater is an important but vulnerable natural resource of this state, that the majority of rural Kentuckians rely exclusively on groundwater for drinking, and that groundwater is inextricably linked to surface waters which may also serve as a drinking water resource. It is also a finding that groundwater is a resource equally vital for agricultural, commercial, and industrial purposes and that useable groundwater is critical to the future development of these industries. Therefore, it shall be the policy of this state to manage groundwater for the health, welfare, and economic prosperity of all citizens.

Effective: July 14, 1992

History: Amended 1992 Ky. Acts ch. 239, sec. 1, effective July 14, 1992. -- Amended 1990 Ky. Acts ch. 307, sec. 1, effective July 13, 1990; and ch. 410, sec. 1, effective July 13, 1990. -- Amended 1986 Ky. Acts ch. 367, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1986. -- Amended 1978 Ky. Acts ch. 384, sec. 39, effective June 17, 1978. -- Created 1966 Ky. Acts ch. 23, sec. 2.