COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MAKES WATER USE PERMIT REVISIONS

(JACKSON, Miss.) -- The Commission on Environmental Quality recently approved two revisions to the *Surface Water and Groundwater Use and Protection Regulations* to address the permitting procedures and requirements associated with the issuance of groundwater and surface water use and withdrawal permits by the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's Office of Land and Water Resources (OLWR). The first revision prohibits the drilling of new water wells or the construction or placement of new surface water intakes, those with a six inch surface casing or larger, prior to obtaining the permits from the OLWR. The second revision removes the requirement that all groundwater and surface water use permit applications be notarized by a Notary Public. Water use permits grant permittees the right to pump a certain volume and rate of water for recognized beneficial use.

The first revision covered under the recent Commission action involves clarification of the intent of water use permits. The regulatory changes will prohibit the drilling of new water wells or the construction and/or placement of new surface water intakes prior to obtaining required water use/withdrawal permits from the OLWR. Large-capacity wells with surface casing of six inches or greater in diameter must be permitted according to state statute. Domestic wells, regardless of casing size, are excluded from these requirements and thus do not have to be permitted for use. As the water demands of the state continue to increase, it is imperative that water users plan ahead accordingly and become more educated regarding water availability and potential supply issues in their area of the state.

The other regulatory revision removes the requirement that all groundwater and surface water use permit applications be notarized by a Notary Public before their submittal to the OLWR. This procedural change will allow the water use permitting process to conform to departmental standards.

The Office of Land and Water Resources is mandated by law to manage and protect the water resources of the state. Additional regulatory changes may be considered in the future to ensure the continued sustainability of Mississippi's vitally important water resources.

# # #