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Subject: SLC Issue Alert on the Tri-State Water Wars

New Publication from the Southern Legislative
Conference

New Issue Alert Available

The Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) of The Council of State Governments has released its most recent **Issue Alert**, *A River Runs Through It: An Update on the Tri-State Water Wars*.

A River Runs Through It: An Update on the Tri-State Water Wars

Throughout the history of the United States, water has been the key to determining settlement patterns and development opportunities. It is migratory in nature and often crosses many boundaries, a characteristic that has generated ownership disputes and countless conflicts. Every state in the contiguous United States shares ground or surface water resources with another state, and almost every major city is located near a river or body of water.

Water resource scarcity can affect many sectors of a state's economy as well as the region's natural ecosystems. The Southern United States, characterized by a network of major rivers and tributaries, and generally abundant precipitation, has enjoyed a generous water supply. Consequently, the region has not experienced the water disputes that have plagued the Western United States. However, development pressure, changes in precipitation patterns, and transitioning priorities and consumption levels have caused a shift in these circumstances. When water shortages do arise, they often can cause interstate conflicts. Perhaps one of the most widely reported and longest running of these interstate disputes in the Southern region involves Alabama, Florida, and Georgia, known as the "tri-state water wars." The tri-state water wars have spanned 25 years and center on water resource allocation in the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) and the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basins. Recognizing the importance of this dispute and the impact the resolution

will have on the states involved, the issue has remained relevant to the ongoing policy work of the Southern Office of The Council of State Governments, the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC). This third review of the issue advances the developments and actions that have occurred since the SLC last reported on the conflict in 2010. Additionally, it should be noted that The Council of State Government's Center for Interstate Compacts has more than 75 years of experience in promoting multi-state problem solving and advocating for the role of states in determining their respective futures.

This ***SLC Issue Alert*** serves as an update to the 2010 ***SLC Regional Resource, Water Allocation and Management: Southern States Outlook*** and the earlier, 2000 ***SLC Regional Resource, The War Over Water*** and examines developments up to December 14, 2015.

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The Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) of The Council of State Governments was established in 1947 and comprises presiding officers and key legislators from 15 Southern states. The SLC is a non-partisan organization located in Atlanta, Georgia.

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