STATE ISSUE: **WATER SUPPLY & STORAGE DEVELOPMENT**

POSITION: FNGLA supports the research & development of traditional and alternative water sources and water storage methods that are environmentally sound, economically cost-effective and technologically feasible.

BACKGROUND: In Florida, agriculture is the second largest industry and the nursery industry is one of its largest segments. The current economic viability and long-term growth of Florida's nursery and landscape industry hinges directly on the availability of sufficient and affordable water resources to meet crop production and landscape irrigation demand. During the most recent drought, government entities throughout Florida imposed wide-ranging restrictions on landscape irrigation – often without regard to science. In turn, these actions directly and negatively impacted Florida's nursery growers, landscape firms, garden centers and horticultural suppliers.

Unlike public water supply utilities which have more flexible ranges of options, many agricultural water users are self-suppliers who must develop and deliver water at its points of use. As a result, nursery growers are almost always limited to traditional surface and ground water sources.

In Florida, the water management districts take the lead in identifying and implementing water resource projects. FNGLA believes these projects must meet current needs and anticipated growth, while also sustain Florida's water resources and natural systems. FNGLA urges the water management districts and local water supply utilities to fully explore and fund all reasonable options to meet projected water demands. These include increased surface water storage, rain harvesting, aquifer recharge, aquifer storage and recovery, ground water augmentation, desalination, and reclaimed water use.

With average annual rainfall ranging from 50 to 70 inches, Florida's challenge is not so much water "shortage" as it is water "storage." There are estimates that more than one billion gallons of fresh water are lost each day as it flows out to sea or the gulf too quickly. As a result, FNGLA believes priority must be given to projects that will expand the ability to capture and store water.