



July 18, 2007

Via Facsimile - Urgent

Senator Richard Shelby
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shelby:

Representing the rapidly growing Lake Martin Home Owners and Boat Owners (HOBOS) Association, Inc., I want to take this opportunity to introduce to you our new organization. Our primary mission is to work together with home owners, boat owners, local businesses, local, state and federal agencies and others to foster long term partnerships to preserve, protect and enhance the overall quality of life of all living things in and around Lake Martin – The Crown Jewel of the South, including, but not limited to, water levels and quality, shoreline preservation, fishing, wildlife, recreational activities and the safety of all boaters. For additional information on the Lake Martin HOBOS, please visit our website at <http://www.lakemartin.org/>.

Alabama is experiencing one of the worst droughts in the state's history, and Lake Martin is approximately nine feet below normal summer pool. We have heard projections that if there is no relief from the drought from Mother Nature, Georgia lakes or a reduction in the minimum downstream requirements currently imposed on the lake by the Army Corp of Engineers, the lake levels could fall to 7 to 10 feet below its normal winter low, or 17 to 20 feet below its normal summer levels. The lake water level is already dangerously low in terms of environmental issues, fish and wildlife concerns, shoreline erosion, navigation safety and other significant matters affecting our great state's natural resource. However, if the current downward trend in the lake level continues as projected, this could be a catastrophic event for the region, not only from the lake's stakeholders perspective, but more so from an economic and environmental outlook.

The surrounding counties of Tallapoosa, Coosa and Elmore and the cities of Alexander City, Dadeville, Eclectic and Tallassee economies have already been negatively impacted by the current lake levels. These entities, along with local businesses, are highly reliant on the tourism dollars generated each year from the thousands of visitors, fishing tournaments and part-time homeowners. The economic impact of the decreased lake levels has or will lead to:

- Significant decrease in all tax revenues base
- Decline in property values
- Reduction in new and existing home sales
- Slow down in economic development
- Insolvent small businesses
- Increase in banks loan exposures

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One of our greatest concerns is the environmental impact to one of the state's greatest natural resources. From an environmental standpoint, the current lake levels and projected future lake levels are dismal. As Lake Martin, through its stakeholders, local cities, counties, businesses, environmental groups and other stewards have spent years establishing the lake as one of the cleanest lakes in the nation. From our viewpoint, the environmental impact to the lake is a near disaster, as the following are in significant jeopardy:

- Water quality
- Aquatic vegetation
- Fish population
- Fish habitats
- Shoreline erosion
- Endangered wildlife

We ask for your office to immediately contact Army Secretary Pete Geren to order the Army Corps of Engineers to release water from a federal reservoir in Georgia needed to provide drought relief to the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River Basin. Furthermore, we ask for your assistance in having the Army Corp of Engineers approve Alabama Power Company's – Request For Approval To Reduce Minimum Flow on the Alabama River, dated May 15, 2007. These joint measures currently are the only means by which to mitigate the damage already sustained by the lake's local economies and our organization's environmental concerns.

Additionally, in order to ensure the probability of such a catastrophic economic and environmental event is significantly reduced in the future there needs to be an immediate change to Lake Martin's current winter water level. We believe such a change is mandatory, as the current rule curve, as established by the Corp of Engineers over 40 years ago, does not take into consideration the changes in current weather patterns and the addition of another flood control dam near Wedowee, Alabama.

We recommend the immediate adoption by the Corp of Engineers and Alabama Power Company to a change in the Lake Martin's current rule curve, which would require the winter lake level to be established at 485 feet, 5 feet below summer pool level, instead of the current 10-foot winter drawdown. If this rule had been in effect last winter, much of the environmental and economic damage would have been prevented. The addition of Lake Harris as an upstream flood control lake and the improvement of long-range weather forecasting justify the change in the current rule curve, established by the Corp more than 40 years ago.

We appreciate your assistance in these very important matters and look forward to speaking with you regarding the above in the very near future. Feel free to contact me anytime at 256-825-0919.

Sincerely,

Jesse Cunningham
Steering Committee Chairman
Lake Martin HOBOS

Cc: Governor Bob Riley
Mr. Willard Bowers, Alabama Power
Mayor Barbara Young, Alexander City
Mayor Joe Smith, City of Dadeville
Mayor Alan Nummy, City of Eclectic
Mayor Robert Payne, City of Tallassee
Tallapoosa, Elmore and Coosa Commission