



Public Water Supply Withdrawals in the Delaware River Basin

Excerpt from [DRBC Water Resources Program 2019-2021](#)

Historic data for public water supply (PWS) withdrawals show a neutral trend largely driven by water conservation measures in the form of changes in plumbing codes, enacted in the early 1990s, which require use of more efficient plumbing fixtures and fittings. In addition, education and awareness of water conservation practices have played a role in decreasing water use for this sector despite increases in population (shown by the red line). Although neutral in the aggregate, withdrawals have increased in several systems where there are population growth regions (i.e., where water conservation practices cannot offset the more rapid increase in population). Over the past 30 years, DRBC has been a leader in enacting regulations to promote water conservation in the areas of source and service metering, leak detection and repair, plumbing fixtures and fittings, and water rate structures. The trend shown in the figure indicates that these regulations have been successful and have contributed to flat trends in PWS water withdrawals, although slight increases are noticed in recent years. The figure also shows the consumptive use portion (light green) of the total withdrawals; the non-consumptive portion (dark green) reflects those volumes returned to the basin after withdrawal. (Note that DRBC does not receive or calculate consumptive use data for the public water sector, but rather uses a basinwide “consumptive use factor” of 10% for public water supply systems).

Monthly withdrawals of Public Water Systems in the Basin 1990-2016. (Note that no data are shown for months where data were incomplete to avoid skewing the displayed trend line).

