



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division

August 18, 2022

To: Governor Ned Lamont
OPM Secretary Jeffrey Beckham
OPM Deputy Secretary Paul Potamianos
Paul Mounds, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Anthony Anthony, Communications Director, Office of the Governor
Chris Collibee, OPM Communications Director

From: Undersecretary Martin Heft

RE: **CT Water Planning Council Interagency Drought Work Group
DECLARATION - STAGE 3 - MODERATE DROUGHT**

The Connecticut Water Planning Council's Interagency Drought Work (IDW) Group met today, August 18, 2022, to review the existing conditions under the Connecticut Drought Preparedness and Response Plan.

On July 13, 2022 all counties were designated as Stage 2 - Incipient Drought. Upon reviewing interim data, current and projected conditions, the IDW recommends the following stage declarations:

Stage 3 - Moderate Drought

New London and Windham County

No Change - Stage 2 - Incipient Drought

Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven and Tolland County

For your reference, the Stage 3 Moderate Drought Defining Criteria and Recommended Mitigation Actions excerpt is included. Under Stage 3, a press release declaring the changes is issued and the following communications are conducted:

- DEMHS through its regional emergency management coordinators will notify municipal Chief Executive Officers and municipal drought liaisons
- DPH will notify the public water suppliers
- State agencies will post information on websites and social media outlets

The IDW will continue to monitor these conditions on a regular basis and provide recommended actions.

Stage 3

Defining Criteria:

A decision to issue a Stage 3 declaration is guided by the following drought criteria thresholds, as well as any other ancillary data:

Precipitation	Three-month total below 65% of average
Groundwater	Four consecutive months below the 25 th percentile
Streamflow	Four out of five months below the 25th percentile
Reservoirs	Average levels less than 70% of normal
Palmer Drought Severity Index	-3.0 to -3.99
Crop Moisture Index	-2.0 to -2.99, excessively dry
VegDRI (seasonal)	Moderate drought conditions
Fire Danger	High
U.S. Drought Monitor	Intensity level D2-D3

This stage was formerly called: Moderate Drought

Stage 3 Recommended Mitigation Actions

Coordination & Management	<i>State Agencies coordinated through the IDW</i>	Declare a Stage 3 Drought and notify MDLs.
		Governor to consider convening Unified Command, including key state agencies and ESF 12 water companies, to review emergency plans and coordinate messaging. Consider establishing a Web EOC incident in order to track water issues.
		Contact each MDL to ensure understanding of the required role and responsibilities of a MDL.
		Commissioners require all state-owned facilities to enact water conservation measures and to review and update any specific drought/emergency plans.
		Communicate with the Army Corps of Engineers or other dam operators on possible use of impoundments for streamflow augmentation in locations where existing streamflow regulations are not adequately meeting the needs of fish and wildlife downstream.
		Initiate contact with federal agencies (FEMA/EPA/USGS/USDA/Corps) in order to identify federal assistance capabilities.
		Provide technical assistance to utilities on managing systems during dry conditions, including (a) administering expedited reviews of proposed system upgrades and alternative water supplies for drought-impacted community water systems; and (b) assist in the identification of emergency connections.
		Evaluate unused or underutilized high yield aquifers developable as temporary emergency water supplies including for non-potable uses.
		Disseminate generic press releases (DEMHS/OPM) and notification letters to water systems, local health directors, well drillers, etc.
		Direct state agencies to conserve water and repair leaks at state facilities.
	<i>Municipalities / Local Officials</i>	Municipal water supply coordinators should provide input to DPH on local conditions; for example, any change in status such as triggers identified in water supply plans or as defined by asset management plans, if any.
	<i>Water Suppliers</i>	Review operations to ensure that conservation efforts are maximized. Non-critical utility uses such as routine flushing, clearwell, clarifier or storage tank cleaning, meter testing and bleeders should be reviewed to eliminate, reduce or delay water use, where feasible.
		Preparation for mandatory conservation, including necessary enforcement mechanisms, will be initiated.
		Determine where temporary interconnections between water utilities are needed and coordinate with DEEP/DPH for expedited permitting.

		Consider preparations to activate "emergency" and "inactive" sources of water supply for potential use and coordinate with DPH.
Public Outreach & Education	State Agencies coordinated through the IDW	Send letters to municipal officials requesting they urge residents to curtail outdoor watering.
		Hold news conference to announce activation of the Water Status website and information line to get information on water status and conservation measures.
		Target heavy water users and evaluate mechanisms for water use reduction. Use guidance provided in "Industrial/Commercial/Institutional Water Users – Planning Guidance for Water Conservation and Emergency Contingency Plans" and "Agricultural Water Users - Planning Guidance for Water Conservation and Emergency Contingency Plans".
		Assist agricultural industry by determining possible issues, prospective situations, and remedial steps that can be taken, including the dissemination of information and technical assistance for irrigation improvements available under federal emergency programs to agricultural growers.
		Remind holders of registered water diversions of their legal responsibilities and conditions that are prerequisite to a suspension of minimum stream flow standards pursuant to CGS Sec. 22a-6 and RCSA 26-141a-4(b).
		Use the internet, public service announcements and radio station broadcasts to urge residents and businesses to conserve water (provide conservation tips such as "Water Efficiency Measures for Residents," and "Water Efficiency Measures for Landscaping"). Encourage water users to cooperate with local officials and utilities as conditions may be worse in specific areas, requiring greater efforts in accordance with adopted utility plan.
	Municipalities / Local Officials	Set a voluntary outdoor water use reduction for all residents and businesses.
	Water Suppliers	Voluntary conservation will be promoted in residential, commercial and industrial facilities to reduce demand from previous non-drought projected usage for the appropriate month.
Data collection, monitoring, & preparedness	State Agencies coordinated through the IDW	Monitor implementation of individual water supply plans (through WebEOC or other means).
		Ensure municipal preparedness:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain feedback from large water systems concerning adequacy of municipal authorities in place for water emergencies. Follow-up and provide technical assistance to towns regarding local ordinances (recommend model ordinances, authorities, and fines.)
		Identify non-essential water uses during the Severe Drought Stage relative to time of year.
		Determine where temporary interconnections between water utilities may be needed, in accordance with CGS Sec. 22a-378.
		Initiate process for drafting Emergency Executive Order for the Office of the Governor.
		Assess and report agricultural impacts of worsening drought.
	Municipalities / Local Officials	Track and report problems related to the drought for both deep and shallow wells.
	Water Suppliers	<p>Review adequacy of water monitoring and consumption records and invest in increased monitoring capabilities where needed.</p> <p>Evaluate potential funding needs for actions required under severe or extreme drought conditions to ensure the availability of adequate funding through budgets or emergency measures.</p> <p>Initiate increased reservoir level monitoring and reporting as directed by DPH.</p>

