

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Manisha Juthani, MD  
Commissioner



Ned Lamont  
Governor  
Susan Bysiewicz  
Lt. Governor

### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND DRINKING WATER BRANCH

DWS Circular Letter #2024-34

**TO:** Public Water Systems  
Local Health Departments

**FROM:** Lisa Michelle Morrissey, Acting Branch Chief *Lisa Michelle Morrissey*

**DATE:** November 19, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Public Water System and Local Health Department Drought Preparedness

A sustained period of below normal precipitation has led to rapid drying across the state. At the recommendation of the Interagency Drought Workgroup, Governor Lamont recently activated Stage 2 of the [Connecticut Drought Preparedness and Response Plan](#) on November 9, 2024. Stage 2 identifies an emerging drought event that has the potential to impact water supplies, agriculture, and natural ecosystems.

#### **FOR PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS:**

Although many public water systems benefited from excellent recharge following a rainy summer, reservoir and groundwater levels are now trending sharply downward. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (“DPH”) requests that all public water systems undertake the following preparedness measures should the drought worsen over the winter months:

- Review and evaluate your current emergency contingency plan to assess its timeliness and adequacy for responding to developing drought conditions. Assess your plan’s drought triggers and associated conservation measures to determine if they remain suitable for sustaining water supplies in the event of a long-term drought event (use the drought of record as a preparedness baseline).
- Prepare and place on stand-by all emergency back-up sources and/or interconnections.
- Coordinate with appropriate local agencies and officials to communicate, monitor, and enforce any voluntary or mandatory water use restrictions.
- Conduct public outreach and communicate with customers to inform them of [drought conditions](#) and [water conservation tips](#).



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- Pause or defer any non-essential system maintenance or upgrades that may consume large quantities of water or require sources or interconnections to be taken out of service.

Public water systems should also report the following to DPH and local health department(s):

- Groundwater and surface water measurements **at least weekly** using the attached forms to [DPHWaterSupplyCapacity@ct.gov](mailto:DPHWaterSupplyCapacity@ct.gov)
- Any drought-related water supply or quality issues
- Status of drought triggers, drought stage changes, and voluntary and/or mandatory conservation measures
- Activation of any emergency sources and/or interconnections
- Any use of licensed water haulers per CT General Statutes Section 20-278H is to be reported to DPH per RCSA § 19-13-B46.

**FOR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:**

Local health departments are encouraged to help circulate water conservation requests from public water suppliers and inform private well users of potential impacts to wells, particularly shallow and low-yield wells, and what to do if affected. DPH requests that each local health department **submit a weekly update** to [DPH.PrivateWellProgram@ct.gov](mailto:DPH.PrivateWellProgram@ct.gov) with the number of new well permits issued for new wells and the hydrofracking or deepening of existing wells for each town in its jurisdiction.

Please reach out to the DPH Drinking Water Section at [DWDcompliance@ct.gov](mailto:DWDcompliance@ct.gov) if you have any questions or require any assistance pertaining to the above requests.

c: Lisa Michelle Morrissey, Deputy Commissioner, DPH  
Emma Cimino, Deputy Commissioner, DEEP  
Jack Betkoski, Chairman, Water Planning Council  
Martin Heft, Chairman, Interagency Drought Workgroup  
Municipal Chief Elected Officials  
Municipal Drought Liaisons  
Regional Councils of Governments