

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Manisha Juthani, MD
Commissioner



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND DRINKING WATER BRANCH

Circular Letter #2022-37

TO: All Public Water Systems, Certified Water Operators, Local Health Directors

FROM: Lori J. Mathieu, Branch Chief *Lori J. Mathieu '22*

DATE: July 14, 2022

SUBJECT: Stage 2 Drought Declared in All Eight Counties of CT

Today in a press release, Governor Lamont approved a recommendation by the Interagency Drought Workgroup to declare that all eight counties in CT are experiencing Stage 2 drought conditions due to below normal precipitation across the state. Under the CT Drought Response and Preparedness Plan, Stage 2 identifies an emerging drought event that has the potential to impact water supplies, agriculture, and natural ecosystems. Residents and businesses are being encouraged to voluntarily undertake water conservation to aid in minimizing future drought impacts. The press release is attached for your review. On June 2, 2022, the Environmental Health and Drinking Water Branch released [Circular Letter #2022-28](#) to inform community water systems and certified operators of drying conditions and that the IDW designated Windham and New London Counties as being in Stage 1 drought.

Stage 2 is the second of five stages of drought defined in the CT Drought Response and Preparedness Plan. Under the Stage 2 actions of the plan, among other actions, increased communication between the Municipal Drought Liaison, water suppliers, and local municipal officials is determined to be needed to ensure that each are alerted of an emerging drought event to begin reviewing drought plans, assess preparedness, and increase messaging on conservation to the public and water suppliers' customers.

The Municipal Drought Liaison (MDL) is a new concept under the state drought plan. Each municipality has identified an MDL and relayed their contact information to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. The liaison will be a primary point of contact for the municipality in communications between the municipality, public water systems, and state entities. The Department of Public Health (DPH) encourages public water systems to identify contacts and begin communications with the MDL to help prepare for the relaying of information on any changes in the status of their water supplies, water use restrictions, or conservation requests. Public water systems can contact the DPH to obtain their MDL contact information by emailing DPHWaterSupplyCapacity@ct.gov.

Phone: (860) 509-7333 • Fax: (860) 509-7359
Telecommunications Relay Service 7-1-1
410 Capitol Avenue, P.O. Box 340308
Hartford, Connecticut 06134-0308
www.ct.gov/dph

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In response to the Stage 2 declaration, the Department of Public Health – Drinking Water Section requests all water systems to review their emergency plans and assess their preparedness in preparation for potentially worsening conditions.

Community Water Systems

The Department of Public Health Drinking Water Section (DWS) requests that all community water systems:

- Report any water quality issues immediately to the DWS
- Report any outages of water service and any related rehabilitation to services and source that may happen as a result of the current drought to the DWS and relevant local officials through the MDL.
- Review all back up and emergency sources and/or interconnections.
- Notify the DWS of the activation of any emergency sources and/or interconnections.
- Record all consumer complaints regarding quality and quantity of water per § 19-13-B102(1)(I)(F) of the Regulations of Connecticut State regulations (RCSA).
- Notify the DWS of any water hauling per RCSA § 19-13-B46.
- Use licensed haulers per Connecticut General Statutes Section 20-278h.
- Review your current emergency contingency plan to assess its adequacy and timeliness in response to developing drought conditions. Assess your current drought triggers to determine if they remain appropriate in having a timely and effective response to developing drought conditions.
- Notify the DWS of any drought stage changes and any voluntary or mandatory consumption restrictions.
- Report weekly their weekly groundwater and surface water readings by submitting their groundwater and surface water reporting forms to the DPH by email to DPHWaterSupplyCapacity@ct.gov.
- Work as feasible with the municipalities you serve on drafting and enacting local water use restriction ordinances.

Local Directors of Health and Chief Sanitarians

Local Health Departments are encouraged to remind private well owners to follow water conservation measures, especially during this period of dry conditions. The DPH requests that local health departments/districts who have private wells in their jurisdiction to provide information on well permits that may be indicators of private wells impacted by drought conditions. Local Health Departments/Districts are requested to report the following information to DPH.PrivateWellProgram@ct.gov on a weekly basis:

- Name of Health Department
- Number of new well permits issued for either deepening or hydro-fracking a private well for each Town in your local health department/district jurisdiction.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the DPH Drinking Water Section by electronic mail at DWDcompliance@ct.gov, if you have any questions or run into any issues with respect to your public water system.

c: Heather Aaron, MPH, LNHA, Deputy Commissioner, DPH
Local Health Directors
Municipal CEOs
CT Council of Governments



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DROUGHT WORKING GROUP DECLARES STAGE 2 DROUGHT CONDITIONS EXIST IN ALL EIGHT COUNTIES

(HARTFORD, CT) – Today, Governor Ned Lamont approved a recommendation by the State of Connecticut’s Interagency Drought Working Group to declare that all eight Connecticut counties are experiencing Stage 2 Drought conditions due to precipitation across the state being below normal. Under the state’s drought plan adopted in 2018, Stage 2 identifies an emerging drought event, potentially impacting water supplies, agriculture, or natural ecosystems.

“Residents should be mindful of their water consumption and take sensible steps to reduce impacts on other water uses and on the environment,” said Governor Lamont. “We must begin early steps now to mitigate the potential for harm should the drought become prolonged.”

“We have experienced drier than normal conditions in the spring and early summer,” said Office of Policy & Management Undersecretary Martin Heft, who chairs the Interagency Drought Workgroup. “The combination of precipitation shortfalls and an extended period above normal temperatures have impacted the state’s water resources and increased demands upon them. Residents should not be alarmed, but begin taking steps now to reduce their water usage.”

Residents and businesses across the state are being asked to voluntarily take the following measures to aid in minimizing future drought impact:

- Reduce automatic outdoor irrigation
- Postpone the planting of any new lawns or vegetation
- Minimize overall water use by fixing leaky plumbing and fixtures
- Follow any additional conservation requests issued by water suppliers or municipalities

Tips on water saving measures can be found on the Department of Public Health’s website [here](#).

Stage 2 is the second of five stages of drought defined in the Connecticut Drought Response and Preparedness Plan. The Interagency Drought Workgroup classified New London and Windham counties as being at Stage 1 on June 2, when there were early signals of abnormally dry conditions. That stage is intended as a “heads up” regarding the possibility of a developing drought.

The decision to move to Stage 2 is based on an assessment of indicator data monitored by state and federal agencies, including precipitation, surface waters, groundwater, reservoirs, soil

moisture, vegetation, and fire danger conditions. The state has experienced this level of drought five times in the past two decades, in 2002, 2007, 2010, 2016 and 2020. If conditions deteriorate further, the state could reach Stage 3, having reached that threshold in four counties in 2020.

The Interagency Drought Workgroup has moved the entire state to Stage 2 because precipitation shortfalls, reduced ground water levels, stream flows, and soil moisture impacts are especially pronounced there. Rainfall and droughts do not follow political boundaries, and impacts can be more severe at certain locations. Those who depend on private wells, fire or irrigation ponds, and other highly localized water resources should be especially mindful of local conditions, especially in places where previous droughts have affected supplies.

The State Interagency Drought Workgroup consists of representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Department of Public Health, Office of Policy and Management, and Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, with assistance from the National Weather Service and United States Geological Survey. More information on the Interagency Drought Workgroup and the State Drought Plan are available [here](#).

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Contact: Chris Collibee

Communications Director

Office of Policy and Management

Chris.Collibee@ct.gov

(860) 418-6296 (Office)

(860) 597-5120 (Mobile)