



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division

July 13, 2022

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

From: Undersecretary Martin Heft

RE: **CT Water Planning Council Interagency Drought Work Group
STATEWIDE DECLARATION - STAGE 2 - INCIPIENT DROUGHT**

The Connecticut Water Planning Council's Interagency Drought Work (IDW) Group met today, July 13, 2022, to review the existing conditions under the Connecticut Drought Preparedness and Response Plan. We wanted to advise you of current conditions and potential for upcoming actions.

We notified you on [June 2, 2022](#) that the counties of New London and Windham were designated as Stage 1 – Below Normal Conditions. **The IDW voted to recommend that all counties be designated as Stage 2 - Incipient Drought.**

Stage 2 represents an emerging drought event, potentially impacting water supplies, agriculture, or natural ecosystems. Impacts from a Stage 2 drought are typically limited or isolated in nature and are likely to be felt first in the most water-constrained settings. At Stage 2, government officials and public water suppliers in affected areas should be engaged and preparing to undertake mitigation activities should they become necessary. Data collection and reporting activities are increased, where appropriate, and communication and coordination becomes a priority. Stage 2 is the first publicly announced stage of drought.

Attached is a draft press release outlining the Stage 2 declaration. Previously these have been sent out by the Office of Policy and Management after concurrence from the Governor's office. Please let me know your preference.

For your reference, the Stage 2 Incipient Drought Defining Criteria and Recommended Mitigation Actions excerpt is included.

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

The following criteria is routinely monitored by the IDW for the purposes of analyzing conditions leading up to and during a drought and used to recommend appropriate mitigation actions:

- Cumulative precipitation
- Groundwater levels
- Streamflow
- Drinking water reservoir levels
- Palmer Drought Severity Index
- Crop Moisture Index
- Vegetation Drought Response Index (only available during growing season)
- Fire danger
- U.S. Drought Monitor

Stage 2: Incipient Drought

Defining Criteria:

A decision to issue a Stage 2 declaration regarding incipient drought is guided by the following drought criteria thresholds, as well as any other ancillary data:

Precipitation	Two-month total below 65% of average
Groundwater	Two out of three months below the 25 th percentile
Streamflow	Two out of three months below the 25 th percentile
Reservoirs	Average levels less than 80% of normal
Palmer Drought Severity Index	-2.0 to -2.99
Crop Moisture Index	-1.0 to -1.99, abnormally dry
VegDRI (seasonal)	Pre-drought conditions
Fire Danger	Moderate
U.S. Drought Monitor	Intensity level D1-D2

This stage was formerly called: Drought Advisory

Stage 2 Recommended Mitigation Actions

Stage 2 Recommended Mitigation Actions		
Coordination & Management	State Agencies coordinated through the IDW	Alert municipal water coordinators and water suppliers of conditions.
		Coordinate with municipal water coordinators, local health directors, and water suppliers to promote water conservation, monitor local situations, and report problems.
		Offer technical assistance to water utilities experiencing problems to assist with system management and promotion of water conservation with specific measures tailored to each water utility. Assist water utilities in strengthening supply-side and demand-side conservation measures.
	Municipalities / Local Officials	Survey local Water Coordinators and assess municipal drought preparedness.
		Advise municipalities to review appropriate ordinances to enable the enforcement of water conservation if needed in the future and to coordinate with water utilities, when pertinent.
		Advise water utilities to implement their coordination plans with their municipalities.
Water Suppliers	Water coordinator and water suppliers should review communications protocol and coordinate on any public announcements (this could involve multiple communities).	
	Alert key town officials (police & fire chiefs, health director, chief executive officer, emergency management director, public works, parks & recreation, superintendent of schools) about conditions.	
Public Outreach & Education	State Agencies coordinated through the IDW	Notify municipal public works departments and fire responders to consider suspending all unnecessary exercises that require fire hydrants to be opened.
		Communicate with DPH and municipal water coordinators about local conditions, concerns, and any changes to the status of water supply.
		Consider postponing discretionary water consuming maintenance, repair work, and shutdowns.
	Municipalities / Local Officials	Provide information to weather forecasters and other media to encourage public interest stories and facilitate dissemination of drought information to the public.
		Compile information on water conservation tips to homeowners, e.g., "Water Efficiency Measures for Residents," and "Water Efficiency Measures for Landscaping," in preparation for distribution through the Internet, public service announcements, and other timely mailings should the drought worsen.
		Increase awareness of the state's drought information website.
Water Suppliers	Work with state agencies to prepare information on water conservation tips for future dissemination to water users through the Internet, newspapers, public service announcements, and other timely mailings.	
	Issue guidance document for private well users who may require assistance with well repairs or enhancement and make this available via the Internet.	
		Consider issuing voluntary conservation appeals to all customers.

		Respond to customer complaints and problems related to drought conditions.
Data collection, monitoring, & preparedness	State Agencies coordinated through the IDW	Continue to monitor the primary indicators of drought, increasing the frequency as needed. Include qualitative data. Prepare new assessment reports as conditions change.
		Review activities of neighboring states through websites, and in coordination with National Weather Service and Survey local health departments, well drillers, and the Department of Consumer Protection concerning well drilling activity related to dry conditions.
		Monitor WebEOC for activities related to dry conditions.
		Review and implement, as needed, the plan for managing potential forest fire hazards and threats.
		Review water supply systems that have historically had adequacy problems, "target systems," and provide technical assistance as needed.
		Review reservoir storage reports of the systems that use surface water supplies and consider more frequent reservoir level reporting for selected systems.
		Verify database accuracy of approved water haulers, approved bottled water purveyors, licensed well drillers, and upload lists to the state drought management website.
		Municipalities / Local Officials
	Water Suppliers	Monitor local water supplies and collect data more frequently as needed.
		Begin preparing for the possibility of bringing alternative/secondary supply systems online.
		Investigate any deviation from normal use registered on production meters.
		Review water supply emergency contingency plan triggers and mitigation activities; update if necessary.