



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division

June 19, 2020

To: Governor Ned Lamont
OPM Secretary Melissa McCaw
OPM Deputy Secretary Konstantinos Diamantis
Jonathan Harris, Senior Advisor Office of the Governor
Paul Mounds, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Max Reiss, Communications Director, Office of the Governor
Chris McClure, Strategic Research and Communications Advisor, OPM

From: OPM Acting Undersecretary Martin Heft

RE: **CT Water Planning Council Interagency Drought Work Group
STAGE 1 - BELOW NORMAL CONDITIONS**

The Connecticut Water Planning Council's [Interagency Drought Work](#) (IDW) Group met today 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.

The State of Connecticut is currently at Stage 1 - Below Normal Conditions. Stage 1 is a preliminary preparedness stage that serves to alert the parties who should be prepared to respond to potentially worsening drought conditions. Typically, this stage is activated in response to early signals of abnormally dry conditions and serves as a "heads up" for the possibility of a developing drought. There is no expectation for a broad public notice of a Stage 1 declaration.

Please be advised that this is an unusual situation in that it is a rapidly developing "flash drought," so while things are not bad right now, in the coming weeks the Office of the Governor should be on standby and prepared to react quickly, with potentially little lead time.

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

Additionally, we have been advised that local media has already picked up on the situation. NBC-30 will air a segment this evening during their 5:30 PM broadcast.

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

Attached is the *Stage 1 Below Normal Conditions Defining Criteria and Recommended Mitigation Actions* excerpt for your reference.

Stage 1: Below Normal Conditions

Defining Criteria:

Stage 1 is a preliminary preparedness stage that serves to alert the parties who should be prepared to respond to potentially worsening drought conditions. The primary target audience includes state, regional, and local officials and public water suppliers. Typically, this stage is activated upon the first signals of impacts from abnormally dry conditions. There is no expectation for a broad public notice of a Stage 1 declaration.

Specific criteria thresholds are not defined for Stage 1 as the decision to begin focusing on a possible developing drought is based on the IDW's professional judgment.

Stage 1 Recommended Mitigation Actions

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Coordination & Management	State Agencies coordinated through the IDW	Pay attention to all aspects of agency operations that could indicate impending drought conditions; communicate and meet as needed.
		Delegate duties and responsibilities as necessary to assure information flow among state agencies.
		Designate agency spokesperson(s) to coordinate interaction with the public and expedite information referrals.
		Submit drought assessment reports as necessary to agency heads.
		Designate an individual to be the contact person for receiving and compiling drought-related information.
Municipalities / Local Officials	Municipal water coordinators provide DPH with up-to-date municipal water coordinator contact information. If no municipal water coordinator exists, designate a local official competent in water supply issues as the municipal water coordinator and provide contact information. Municipal water coordinator maintains regular communications flow with local emergency management director.	
Water Suppliers	Designate a point contact person for communication with municipalities and the state. Provide up-to-date contact information to DPH to ensure the communication of vital information and assess needed technical and financial assistance in an emergency.	
Public Outreach & Education		The Below Normal Conditions stage is intended to initiate internal communication and awareness among the IDW and other decision makers, in response to observations or reports that warrant heightened awareness of conditions. Communication with the public is not planned at this time.
Data collection, monitoring, & preparedness	State Agencies coordinated through the IDW	Continue to regularly monitor the primary indicators of drought; systematically collect, analyze, and disseminate real-time drought-related information.
		Identify geographic extent of dry conditions and determine affected regions.
		Plan what staff and/or funding could be made available, if necessary, to support increased monitoring activities.
		Verify that all monitoring networks and drought information websites are functioning and include relevant, up-to-date information.
		Review database of contact information for public water suppliers and municipal water coordinators and update as needed.
		Update database/map of public water suppliers that have requested voluntary conservation and/or have placed mandatory water restrictions.