



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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Charles D. Baker
Governor

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Lieutenant Governor

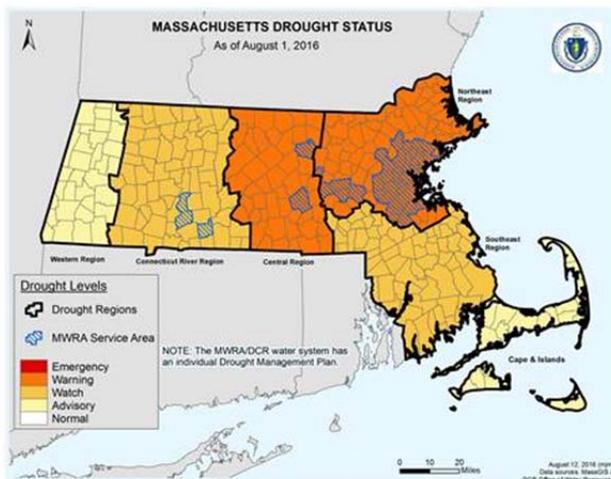
Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary

Martin Suuberg
Commissioner

August 15, 2016

To: All registered or permitted Public Water Suppliers and all other users permitted under the Water Management Act
Re: Drought Warning / Drought Watch / Drought Advisory Status

On August 12, 2016, with most of Massachusetts continuing to experience dry conditions for the fifth straight month, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton issued a Drought Warning for the Central and Northeast Massachusetts, up from a Drought Watch in July; a Drought Watch for Southeastern Massachusetts and the Connecticut River Valley, up from a Drought Advisory in July; and issued a new Drought Advisory for Western Massachusetts and the Cape and Islands. The declaration resulted from the recommendation issued from an August 12th meeting of the Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force. The Drought Management Task Force is comprised of state, federal and local officials. These August 12th declarations will remain in effect until water levels return to normal in the affected regions. The map below summarizes Massachusetts' drought status as of this month.



The latest drought status update is published on the Web at

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/water-res-protection/water-data-tracking/drought-status.html>.

To confirm which drought region your town or city is in, go to the above website and in the “Drought Maps” section click on the link to “List of Massachusetts Towns by Drought Region”.

Areas within the Drought Warning are currently experiencing precipitation levels 5-8 inches below normal over past four months. A Drought Warning indicates that groundwater, stream flow, and reservoir levels are below normal, and initiates a much more concerted set of government responses including instituting water restrictions, and more intensified monitoring and coordination between the agencies. The declaration of a Drought Watch represents extremely low groundwater and streamflow levels resulting from prolonged periods of precipitation deficit, including a lack of snowfall in the winter months. The declaration of a Drought Watch warrants detailed monitoring of drought conditions, close coordination among state and federal agencies, and technical outreach and assistance to the affected municipalities. Additionally, a Drought Advisory indicates a level of dry conditions that warrants closer tracking by government agencies.

Drought Declaration and Water Management Act Permits

Water Management Act (WMA) permittees may have permit conditions requiring that non-essential outdoor water use be reduced or further restricted in response to the Drought declaration. **If you hold a WMA permit, please review any conditions pertaining to outdoor water use to determine if you are required to implement more stringent restrictions when the Drought Management Task Force declares a Drought Warning, Watch or Advisory.** Non-Public Water Supply permit holders such as golf courses, industrial, commercial, or agricultural users, should also review their permit for water use restriction requirements.

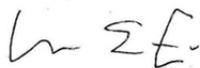
In addition, in response to this year's increasingly dry conditions, **MassDEP has developed more detailed guidance on appropriate outdoor water use restrictions at each drought levels (enclosed with this letter).** This guidance reflects the need to limit outdoor water use to ensure essential needs such as drinking water, fire protection and crop irrigation are being met. It is generally more restrictive than the outdoor water use requirements in Water Management permits. MassDEP strongly recommends that all PWS's, even those without permit conditions requiring them to do so, institute non-essential outdoor water use restrictions.

Public Water Suppliers (PWS) that impose mandatory use restrictions are required to notify the Department, 310 CMR 22.15(8). The Department requests you also notify us when you impose voluntary use restrictions. Copies of the form used to notify us of the restrictions can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/watersheds/municipal-water-use-restrictions.html>. Please send a completed form to: Jennifer D'Urso, Water Management Program, One Winter Street, Boston, MA 02108, or email at jen.durso@state.ma.us. This will help the Department respond to inquiries regarding use restrictions. We appreciate your efforts to help the Department maintain these lists which are useful for answering questions from the public, as well as targeting public outreach and compliance assistance efforts.

Any PWS having difficulty meeting demands, drought related or not, may want to request a Declaration of Water Supply Emergency ("Emergency Declaration") from the Department. The provisions of the Emergency Declaration process are outlined in regulations at 310 CMR 36.40. Suppliers should contact your DEP Regional Drinking Water Program Chief (see contact information below), or Duane LeVangie of the WMA Program at (617) 292-5706, to discuss concerns or begin the Emergency Declaration process.

The Emergency Declaration will require the PWS to submit a plan for Departmental review and approval that includes provisions to remedy the emergency. Such a plan could include measures to purchase water from another supplier, use emergency sources, implement aggressive conservation measures, and provide a mechanism to restrict outside water use for those PWSs that do not currently have the ability to implement such measures.

Very truly yours,



Douglas E. Fine
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Water Resources

Cc: Duane LeVangie, WMA Program Chief, DEP Boston (617-292-5706)
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