



# Department of Environmental Protection

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Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Matthew A. Beaton  
Secretary

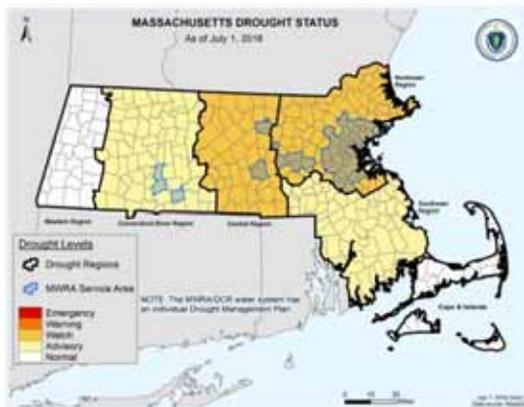
Martin Suuberg  
Commissioner

July 12, 2016

To: All Registered or Permitted Public Water Suppliers and all other users permitted under the Water Management Act

Re: Drought Watch / Drought Advisory Status

On July 8, 2016, the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Matthew Beaton, issued a Drought Watch for the Central and Northeast Drought Regions and a Drought Advisory for the Connecticut River and Southeast Drought Regions of Massachusetts based on advice from the Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force. The drought is retroactive to July 1, 2016. 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”.

Drought Advisory and Watch are the second and third of five levels of drought conditions. The five levels in the Drought Management Plan are: Normal, Advisory, Watch, Warning and Emergency. As of June 30, 2016 precipitation, streamflow, and groundwater elevations were below normal throughout most areas of Massachusetts.

## **Drought Declaration and Water Management Act Permits**

A Drought Watch triggers the following activities by MassDEP and other applicable agencies: closer detailed monitoring of developing conditions; close coordination among state and federal agencies; and technical outreach and assistance for the affected municipalities. Water Management Act (WMA) permittees in those regions declared as Advisory or Watch 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 Advisory or Watch.** 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. MassDEP recommends that permittees whose permits do not include outdoor water use restrictions (generally older permits that have not been revised in recent years) also consider instituting 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](mailto:jen.durso@state.ma.us). This will assist the Department in responding 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)  
Thomas Mahin, Drinking Water Chief, DEP NERO (978-694-3226)  
Robert Bostwick, Drinking Water Chief, DEP CERO (508-849-4036)  
Richard Rondeau, Drinking Water Chief, DEP SERO (508-946-2816)  
Deirdre Doherty, Drinking Water Chief, DEP WERO (413-755-2148)  
Jen Pedersen, MWWA  
Julia Blatt, Mass River Alliance