



News for Immediate Release

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DEP Lifts Drought Declarations for 40 Counties; Four Northern Counties Changed to Drought Watch Status

Harrisburg — Based on Pennsylvania Drought Task Force recommendations, the Department of Environmental Protection today lifted drought watch declarations for 40 counties and reclassified four counties to drought watch status.

"Recent rainfall, particularly in the last week, has returned stream flows, groundwater levels and soil moisture levels to normal in the eastern and several southern portions of the state," DEP Secretary Mike Krancer said. "Conditions have begun to improve, but rainfall deficits still exist in the northwest and north-central regions. For now, we will keep those drought watch declarations in place."

Drought watches and warnings were issued Aug. 5 because of below-normal rainfall that resulted in low stream-flow conditions, decreased groundwater levels and precipitation deficits of up to four inches. The Pennsylvania Drought Task Force used reports and forecasts from the National Weather Service in conjunction with DEP's drought monitoring program to form the recommendation.

A drought watch declaration, the first and least severe level of the state's three drought classifications, calls for a voluntary five-percent reduction in non-essential water use. A drought warning is the second level of the drought classification and asks residents to voluntarily reduce water use by 10-15 percent. A drought emergency is declared through proclamation by the governor, bans non-essential use and requires public water suppliers to implement contingency plans.

Water conservation tips and drought information can be found online at www.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: drought.

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Editor's note: The 40 counties for which the drought watch was lifted are Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Bradford, Bucks, Butler, Cambria, Centre, Chester, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Crawford, Dauphin, Delaware, Erie, Forest, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Juniata, Lancaster, Lawrence, Lebanon, Lycoming, Mercer, Mifflin, Montgomery, Perry, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Tioga, Venango, Warren and Wyoming. The counties changed from drought warning to drought watch are Cameron, Elk, McKean and Potter.

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