

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8555
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8555
April 14, 2006

Bureau of Watershed Management

717-772-4048

--- DROUGHT WATCH ---

Dear Public Water Supplier:

We are writing to inform you about the statewide drought watch declaration, which Secretary Kathleen McGinty announced on Tuesday, April 11, 2006 on behalf of Governor Ed Rendell. The declaration comes in response to escalating precipitation deficits, extremely low stream flows and declining ground water levels. Stream flows are at record low levels for this time of the year in many parts of Pennsylvania, and ground water levels are either below normal or dropping quickly in response to lack of winter snowfall and spring precipitation. Sixty day accumulated precipitation deficits range from about two to four inches throughout the state.

Now is the time to begin conserving water supplies for summer and fall, when those supplies become naturally depleted by drawdowns. Ground water normally depletes during the summer/fall months and does not recover until after the foliage is down in the late fall. Until that time, evapo-transpiration consumes nearly all rainfall that does not run off directly to streams, and very little if any rainfall penetrates to our ground water aquifers.

Please review your drought contingency plan and update your plan if necessary to account for any changes in either your sources or the demands on your system. If you do not have a drought contingency plan, you should be preparing one. If you are preparing one for the first time, we have information available to help you, and we can provide technical assistance. Call our Division of Water Use Planning at the number above if you need assistance. After you have completed your plan, you should submit it to us for review and approval.

We encourage you to use the Drought Information Center on our Web site at <http://www.depweb.state.pa.us> (keyword "Drought"). We post drought updates on that site on a regular basis to keep you

informed of emerging conditions. That site also either provides or links to information that is useful for monitoring conditions in your area or for educating your customers in various methods of conserving water. If you have a Web site, you may wish to consider linking directly to our site, so your customers will have ready access to our information as well.

Remember, in a drought watch, we should all be seeking to reduce water use by about 5 percent through voluntary conservation measures. During a warning, our goal is 10-15 percent reductions, still through voluntary measures. Under a gubernatorial emergency proclamation, bans on nonessential water uses become mandatory, and water rationing may also be employed, if necessary, with the approval of the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator, as agent of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Council. Prudent use of our resources now can help to prevent, or at least delay, the need for emergency measures later.

If you have any questions, or we can be of assistance to you in any way, please feel free to contact our Division of Water Use Planning at 717-772-4048.

Sincerely,

Stuart I. Gansell
Director
Bureau of Watershed Management and
Commonwealth Drought Coordinator

Enclosures

Governor's Proclamation
[4 Pa. Code Chapter 119](#)
[35 Pa. C.S. §7707](#)
[4 Pa. Code Chapter 120](#)