

Drought Report

October 6, 2015

Current Status: There are no drought declarations at this time.

This report summarizes the various indicators utilized in drought monitoring. Each parameter (groundwater, surface water, precipitation, and palmer index) has their own individual indicator for each county. When readings hit a pre-determined trigger level, the indicator is coded as “Normal”, “Watch”, “Warning”, or “Emergency” for that county. These indicators are used to evaluate the drought status of a particular county; they are not, themselves drought declarations. Drought declarations are determined by the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator, with support of the Drought Task Force, and given final approval by the Governor.

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Precipitation –Over the past week, precipitation occurred across the state, ranging from 0.3-5.1 inches, with the highest amounts in the central and eastern portions of the state. The 90-day precipitation deficit shows most counties with normal to below normal departures from average precipitation, with the exception of the southwest showing above normal precipitation.

The precipitation indicators based on a 90-day departure are showing 9 counties in “Watch” status (Bedford, Columbia, Forest, Juniata, Lackawanna, Snyder, Susquehanna, Warren, and Wayne). Zero counties are in “Warning” or “Emergency” for this date. The following changes occurred from the previous week: Bucks, Chester, Dauphin, Delaware, Fulton, Montgomery, Perry, Philadelphia, and Wyoming went from “Watch” to “Normal”; Franklin went from “Warning” to “Normal”; Bedford and Susquehanna went from “Warning” to “Watch”; and Forest went from “Normal” to “Watch”. A total of 12 counties improved to a better status, while only one county moved into a more severe status.

Surface Water- Instantaneous streamflow varies across the Commonwealth with most gages at or below normal flow. For this date there are 2 gages with instantaneous flow at less than the 10th percentile, compared to 25 in the previous week.

The 30-day running average streamflow indicators are showing 2 counties in “Watch” status (Erie and Somerset). There are zero counties in “Warning” or “Emergency” status for this date. The following changes occurred from the previous week: Chester, Columbia, Delaware, Elk, Forest, Franklin, Juniata, Montour, Perry, Philadelphia, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Westmoreland, and Wyoming went from “Watch” to “Normal”. A total of 14 counties improved to a better status.

Groundwater – The 30-day moving average indicators for groundwater levels are showing 13 counties in drought “Watch” (Cambria, Chester, Columbia, Delaware, Indiana, Juniata, Lancaster, Luzerne, Perry, Philadelphia, Sullivan, Westmoreland, and Wyoming), zero counties in drought “Warning”, and 4 counties in drought “Emergency” (Fayette, Lawrence, Mercer, and Somerset). The following changes occurred from the previous week: McKean and Potter went from “Watch” to “Normal”; Columbia, Juniata, Luzerne, and Perry went from “Normal” to “Watch”; and Fayette and Somerset went from

“Warning” to “Emergency”. A total of 2 counties improved to a better status, while 6 counties moved into a more severe status.

Palmer Drought Severity Index – The Palmer soil moisture indicator is displaying all counties in “Normal” status. The following changes occurred from the previous week: 21 counties moved from “Watch” back to “Normal” (Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Greene, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Somerset, Venango, Warren, Washington, and Westmoreland).

Public Water Supply Agencies (PWSAs) – The following public water suppliers are on mandatory water restrictions: Galeton Borough, Jay Township, and Irvona Municipal Authority. Also, Becarria Coalport Irvona Municipal Authority has a voluntary conservation notice in place.

Forecast – The 7-day forecast indicates approximately 0.1 to 0.83 inches of precipitation for the state, with the highest rainfall amounts in the western portion of the state. The 8 to 14-day forecast indicates 0.1 to 0.66 inches of precipitation for the state, with highest rainfall totals in the northwestern portion of the state.

Summary – With recent rainfall, instantaneous streamflows statewide show most gages at or above normal flow. The 30-day moving average streamflow indicators show only 2 counties in “Watch” status. The 90-day precipitation departures are showing improved conditions from the previous week. The 30-day moving average groundwater well levels show 13 counties in “Watch”, zero counties in “Warning”, and 4 counties in “Emergency” status. A Drought Task Force meeting is not being scheduled at this time. Conditions will continue to be closely monitored in the event that it becomes necessary to convene a Drought Task Force meeting.