

NEWS RELEASE

DRBC Lifts Drought Emergency Actions

WEST TRENTON, N.J. (Sept. 30) -- Two major storms that unleashed heavy rains along the East Coast along with recent showers prompted the Delaware River Basin Commission to lift drought emergency actions it had put in place last month.

The Commission took the action today at its regular monthly meeting, noting that storage in three large water supply reservoirs in the upper basin had risen by 23 billion gallons since mid-September. Streamflows also have rebounded and ground water levels, some at record lows during the summer, are showing signs of recovery.

The heavy rains also flushed the "salt front" in the Delaware River downstream to just north of the Delaware Memorial Bridge, which is eight miles below its normal location for this time of year. If the salty water migrates too far upstream it can cause corrosion problems for industries which use Delaware River water and increase costs for water treatment.

Storage in the three upper basin reservoirs (Pepacton, Neversink, and Cannonsville) stood at 156 billion gallons (bg) today. The reservoirs have a combined storage capacity of 271 bg.

Although the recent rainfall has helped considerably, levels in the reservoirs are still 13 percent below normal for this time of year. Commission officials urged the basin's citizens to continue to conserve water (on a voluntary basis), noting that water conservation should be a life-long-habit.

Lifted today by the commission were these emergency actions that had been adopted August 18:

- The marshaling of water supplies in state and power company reservoirs in a move to bolster streamflows by coordinating releases from the impoundments.

- A requirement that large self-supplied users of surface water prepare and submit to the commission contingency plans for water curtailment should that become necessary. The requirement never kicked in.

- A reduction of the Trenton flow objective from 3,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 2,700 cfs to preserve storage in two lower basin reservoirs - Blue Marsh on the Schuylkill River and Beltzville on the Lehigh River. The flow objective reverted back to 3,000 cfs today.

- An arrangement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to store water in the Corps' F.E. Walter Reservoir to provide releases to increase downstream flows. The reservoir, located on the Lehigh River near Wilkes-Barre, Pa., normally is used solely for flood control and recreation.

The Delaware River Basin Commission is an interstate/federal agency formed in 1961 to manage the water resources in the 13,539 square-mile watershed. Editors/News Directors: Visit the DRBC's Drought Information Center on its web site: <http://www.state.nj.us/drbc>. There's a wealth of drought-related information, including reservoir storage levels, the location of the "salt front," and a list of the communities that are in the basin.

SOURCE Delaware River Basin Commission Web Site: <http://www.state.nj.us/drbc>

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