

November 9, 2020

--DROUGHT WATCH--

Dear Public Water Supplier:

We are writing to inform you about the expanded drought declaration DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell announced on October 28, 2020, on behalf of Governor Tom Wolf. Columbia County is added to the list of counties on drought watch, bringing the total to thirty.

The following is the list of counties under a drought declaration:

Drought Warning

Clinton, McKean, and Potter

Drought Watch

Armstrong, Blair, Bradford, Butler, Cambria, Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Columbia, Cumberland, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, Union, Warren, and Wyoming.

The declarations are in response to low stream flows, declining groundwater levels, and below-normal precipitation primarily across counties in the central and western portions of Pennsylvania.

Please review your Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) and update your DCP, if necessary, to account for any changes in either your sources or the demands on your system. If you do not have a DCP or your existing DCP is older than 3 years, you should be preparing one. If you are preparing one for the first time, we have information available to help you at <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PlanningConservation/Drought/Pages/Forms.aspx>. For technical assistance please call our Planning and Conservation Division at 717.772.4048. DCPs can be submitted online through the Drought Emergency Application (DEA) link provided on the drought forms page.

We encourage you to use the Drought Information Center on our website at <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PlanningConservation/Drought/Pages/default.aspx>. We post drought updates on this website regularly to keep you informed of emerging conditions. The website also either provides or links to information that is useful for monitoring conditions in your area or educating your customers in various methods of conserving water. If you have a website, you may wish to consider linking directly to the Drought Information Center 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, public water suppliers providing service to 50 or more customer connections with sources or a service area within a designated drought emergency area are required to develop, adopt, and submit a DCP to the Planning and Conservation Division for approval. In addition, should bans on nonessential water use become mandatory, water rationing may be approved, if necessary, by the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator, as an 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 your agency has already declared restrictions (voluntary or mandatory) please notify your local DEP Regional Office.

If you have any questions, or we can be of assistance to you in any way, please feel free to contact our Planning and Conservation Division by e-mail at droughtinfo@pa.gov or by telephone at 717.772.4048.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristina Peacock-Jones".

Kristina Peacock-Jones, P.E.
Commonwealth Drought Coordinator
Division of Planning and Conservation