



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

## CONNECTICUT INTERAGENCY DROUGHT WORKGROUP: FOUR COUNTIES ARE EXPERIENCING STAGE 2 DROUGHT CONDITIONS

(Hartford) -- With precipitation across Connecticut three to seven inches below normal over the last 90 days, the state's Interagency Drought Workgroup has announced that the four northern counties (Litchfield, Hartford, Tolland, and Windham) are experiencing Stage 2 Drought conditions. Under the state's new drought plan adopted in 2018, Stage 2 has replaced the previously used "Drought Advisory" stage and identifies an emerging drought event, potentially impacting water supplies, agriculture, or natural ecosystems.

"We have experienced drier than normal conditions in the spring and summer," said Office of Policy & Management Undersecretary Martin Heft, who chairs the Interagency Drought Workgroup. "The combination of precipitation shortfalls and an extended period of excessive heat has impacted the state's water resources and increased demands upon them. Many water suppliers struggle to keep pace with increased consumer demand for outdoor water uses and impacts are also being experienced in the state's streams and agricultural and forest lands. We must begin early steps now to mitigate the potential for harm should the drought become prolonged."

Residents and businesses in Stage 2 counties are being asked to voluntarily take the following measures to aid in minimizing future drought impact:

- Reduce automatic outdoor irrigation
- Postpone the planting of any new lawns or vegetation
- Minimize overall water use by fixing leaky plumbing and fixtures
- Follow any additional conservation requests issued by water suppliers or municipalities

"Residents should not be alarmed, but should be mindful of their water consumption and take sensible steps to stretch water supplies and reduce impacts on other water uses and on the environment," Department of Public Health Acting Commissioner Dr. Deidre Gifford said.

Tips on water saving measures can be found on the Department of Public Health's website [here](#).

Stage 2 is the second of five stages of drought defined in the Connecticut Drought Response and Preparedness Plan. The Interagency Drought Workgroup classified the entire state as being at Stage 1 on June 19, when there were early signals of abnormally dry conditions. That stage is intended as a "heads up" regarding the possibility of a developing drought.

The decision to move to Stage 2 is based on an assessment of indicator data monitored by state and federal agencies, including precipitation, surface waters, groundwater, reservoirs, soil moisture, vegetation, and fire danger conditions. The state has experienced this level of drought four times in the past two decades, in 2002, 2007, 2010, and 2016. If conditions deteriorate further, the state could reach Stage 3, having reached that threshold only once before, in 2016.

The Interagency Drought Workgroup has moved the four northern counties to Stage 2 because precipitation shortfalls, reduced ground water levels, stream flows, and soil moisture impacts are especially pronounced there. Rainfall and droughts do not follow political boundaries, and impacts can be more severe at certain locations. Those who depend on private wells, fire or irrigation ponds, and other highly localized water resources should be especially mindful of local conditions, especially in places where previous droughts have affected supplies.

The State Interagency Drought Workgroup consists of representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Department of Public Health, Office of Policy and Management, and Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, with assistance from the National Weather Service and United States Geological Survey. More information on the Interagency Drought Workgroup and the State Drought Plan are available [here](#).

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