

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
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**DEP Declares Drought Watch for 34 Pennsylvania Counties**  
Drought Warning Issued for Potter County

**Harrisburg, PA –** The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today issued a drought watch declaration for 34 Pennsylvania counties and a drought warning declaration for Potter County following a meeting of the Commonwealth Drought Task Force where members evaluated recent data that indicate conditions for water supplies are continuing to deteriorate.

The declarations are in response to low stream flows, declining groundwater levels and below-normal precipitation primarily across counties in the upper half and south-central portions of Pennsylvania. These conditions have resulted in rainfall deficits of as much as 6.0 inches during the past 90 days.

“A number of public water systems have already instituted voluntary and mandatory water restrictions to preserve their drinking water supplies,” DEP Acting Secretary Patrick McDonnell said. “We’re asking residents and businesses to use water wisely and follow simple water conservation tips to ease the demand for water.”

A drought watch is the least severe of the three drought declarations. It calls for a voluntary 5 percent reduction in non-essential water use. During a drought warning, citizens are encouraged to voluntarily reduce their water use between 10-15 percent in affected counties. A drought emergency calls for mandatory restrictions on nonessential water use to protect water supplies as well as public health and safety. A drought emergency requires a proclamation from the Governor.

Through a cooperative program with the U.S. Geological Survey, DEP helps fund a statewide network of gauges to monitor groundwater levels and stream flows. This network provides the state’s drought coordinator with comprehensive data that is used to determine drought classifications. In addition to precipitation, groundwater and stream flow levels, DEP monitors soil moisture and water supply storage. This data is shared with other state and federal agency personnel who make up the task force.

Varying conditions under drought watch and warnings may dictate individual water suppliers or municipalities asking for more stringent conservation actions. DEP is notifying all water suppliers in the affected areas of the need to monitor their supplies and update their drought contingency plans as necessary.

DEP is also looking at new and innovative ways to improve the management of the state's water resources.

“Historically, stormwater management consisted of getting runoff to streams as quickly as possible, and away from our cities and towns. Within the past decade, we have begun to see stormwater as a resource to recharge groundwater, and we continue to look for innovative ways to encourage these practices,” McDonnell said.

DEP recommends the following ways to reduce water use:

- Run water only when necessary. Avoid running the faucet while brushing your teeth or shaving, or letting the shower run for several minutes before use;
- Check for household leaks. A leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water each day!
- Run dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads.
- Replace older appliances with high-efficiency, front-loading models that use about 30 percent less water and 40 to 50 percent less energy.
- Install low-flow plumbing fixtures and aerators on faucets.

DEP also offers other water conservation recommendations and water audit procedures for commercial and industrial users, such as food processors, hotels and educational institutions. These recommendations and additional drought monitoring information are available by [clicking here](#) or visiting DEP's website, [www.dep.pa.gov/drought](http://www.dep.pa.gov/drought).

Following is the list of counties under a drought declaration:

### **Drought Warning**

Potter

### **Drought Watch**

Armstrong  
Bedford  
Berks  
Blair  
Bradford  
Cameron  
Carbon  
Centre  
Clarion  
Clearfield  
Clinton  
Dauphin

Elk  
Forest  
Fulton  
Huntingdon  
Indiana  
Jefferson  
Juniata  
Lawrence  
Lebanon  
Lehigh  
Lycoming  
McKean  
Mercer  
Mifflin  
Northampton  
Perry  
Schuylkill  
Snyder  
Sullivan  
Tioga  
Union  
Venango

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