

PRESS RELEASE

Significant Drought Conditions Declared in Several Regions

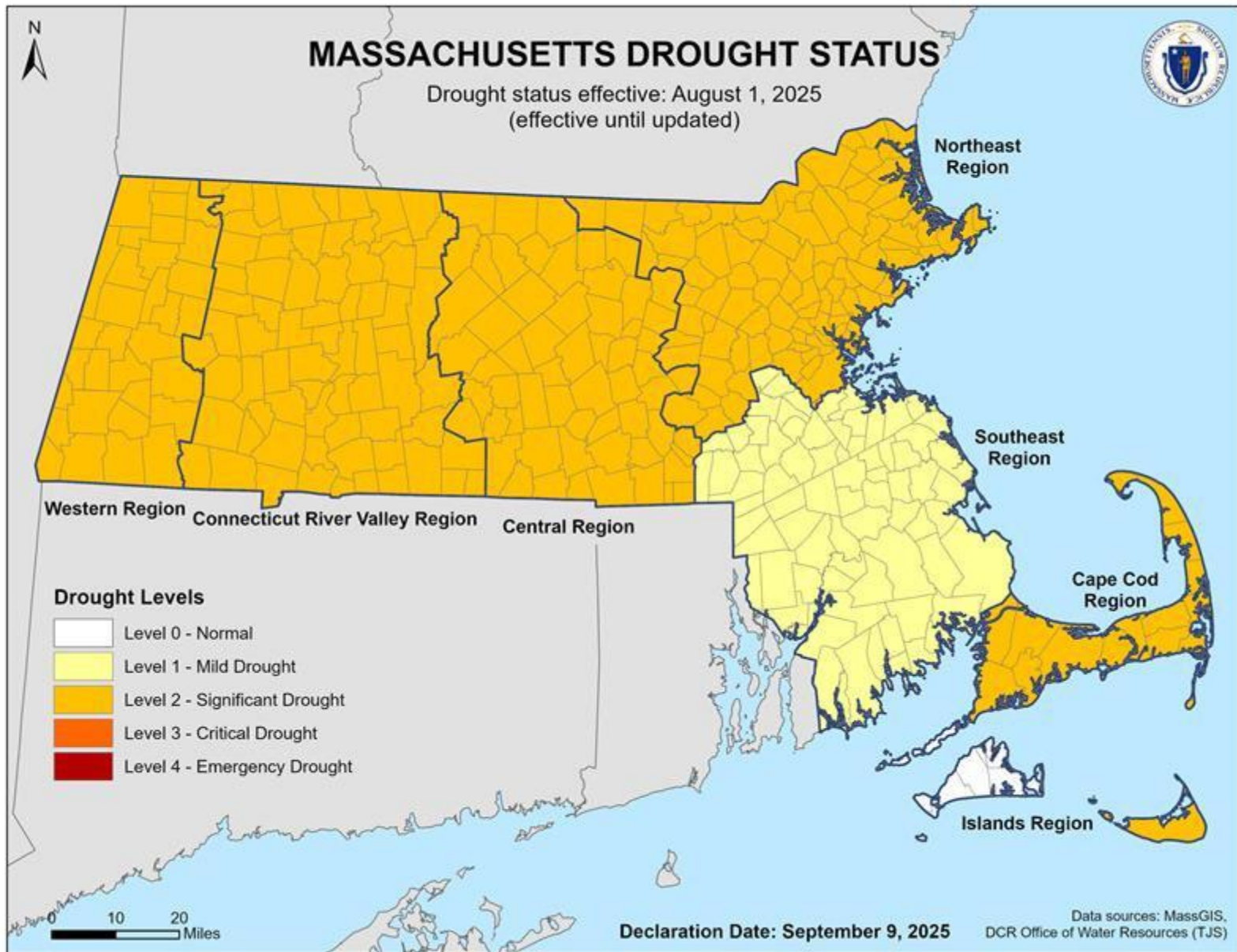
Western, Connecticut River Valley, Central, Northeast Regions and Nantucket County have worsened to a Level-2 Significant Drought, Southeast Region has been raised to a Level-1 Mild Drought

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

9/09/2025

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Drought Management Task Force BOSTON — Today, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper declared that drought in the Western, Connecticut River Valley, Central, Northeast Regions and Nantucket County has worsened to a Level-2 Significant Drought. The Southeast Region has moved from normal conditions to a Level-1 Mild Drought, while the Cape Cod Region remains at a Level-2 Significant Drought, and Dukes County still in Normal Conditions.



Drought is a look back on conditions over a period of time. Although the spring and early summer months brought much-needed rainfall, which helped bring many regions out of drought, below normal rainfall over the last three months has quickly moved these regions back into a significant drought. August was notably dry in Massachusetts, with most areas observing 1 to 2 inches or more below normal rainfall. However, some areas of Central Massachusetts did experience near- to above-normal

precipitation. Three-month precipitation deficits remain widespread, with much of the state seeing only 40-80% of normal rainfall.

“Warmer summers mean dryer environmental conditions in our parks, forests and communities. As several regions experience significant drought conditions, we must be mindful of these additional factors,” said **EEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper**. “We urge the public to remain vigilant during this time and adhere to local water restrictions and practice water conservation. We can all do our part to prevent brush and forest fires by exercising caution with outdoor activities like campfires, and the safe disposal of smoking materials.”

Streamflow has declined significantly in Massachusetts resulting in dry streambeds, the ponding of rivers, and exposed banks along ponds and lakes. Habitats, vegetation and fish migration out to sea have been impacted as a result of drought conditions. Groundwater levels are mostly normal across the region, but are quickly declining, especially on Cape Cod and Nantucket, where they are already below normal. Although, recent rainfall has provided some relief, the lack of precipitation and higher temperatures have increased the risk for outdoor fires.

As outlined in the [Massachusetts Drought Management Plan](#), a Level 1 – Mild Drought and a Level 2 – Significant Drought require detailed monitoring of drought conditions. These levels also require ongoing coordination among state and federal agencies to implement drought response actions such as water use restrictions. Additionally, engagement with municipalities, including local Boards of Health, is essential. This includes providing technical outreach and assistance to water suppliers and affected municipalities.

The Drought Management Task Force (DMTF) collected and analyzed data from August 2024 through August 2025. Residents can report dry environmental conditions and submit photos to help monitor the situation on the [Massachusetts Water Impact](#)

[Reporter \(here\)](#). Additionally, a [FAQ](#) is now available for questions regarding the current drought status and water conservation.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will continue to assist communities in managing their water systems. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water supply system is not experiencing drought conditions.

Below are recommendations for communities and individuals living and working within a Level 1 – Mild Drought and Level 2 – Significant Drought, including those utilizing a private well. Residents and businesses are strongly urged to check with their local water system in case more stringent watering restrictions are in place. Many systems may have other more severe local conditions and constraints on water supply.

For Regions in Level 1 – Mild Drought

Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use;
- Limit outdoor watering to one day per week from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m., or less frequently if required by your water supplier;
- Plant only local and drought-resistant species;
- Fix indoor leaks, such as from toilets, faucets, and showers, which result in more than 60 percent of indoor use;
- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities;
- Minimize lawn sizes; and,
- Harvest rainwater for outdoor watering.

Communities/Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state's [library of outreach materials](#);
- Provide timely drought and water conservation information to residents and businesses;
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,
- Develop a local drought management plan (learn more [here](#)).

For Regions in Level 2 – Significant Drought

Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use;
- Limit outdoor watering to hand-held hoses or watering cans, to be used only after 5 p.m. or before 9 a.m.;
- Follow local water use restrictions;
- Fix indoor leaks, such as from toilets, faucets, and showers, which result in more than 60 percent of indoor use; and,
- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities.

Immediate Steps for Communities/Municipalities:

- Adopt and implement the state's nonessential outdoor water use restrictions for Drought Level 2 which calls for limiting outdoor watering to hand-held hoses or watering cans, to be used only after 5 p.m. or before 9 a.m. If local restrictions are more stringent, continue to keep them in place during the course of the drought.
- Limit or prohibit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; and,
- Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use.

Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities/Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state's [library of outreach materials](#);
- Provide timely information to local residents and businesses;
- Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates;
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,
- Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state [Drought Management Plan](#).

State agencies will continue to closely monitor and assess conditions across the state, coordinate any needed dissemination of information to the public, and help federal, state, and local agencies prepare additional responses that may be needed in the future. The DMTF will [meet](#) again on Wednesday, October 8th at 10:00 AM. For further information on water conservation and what residents can do, visit the EEA's [drought](#) and [water conservation](#) pages.