

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Drought Management Task Force

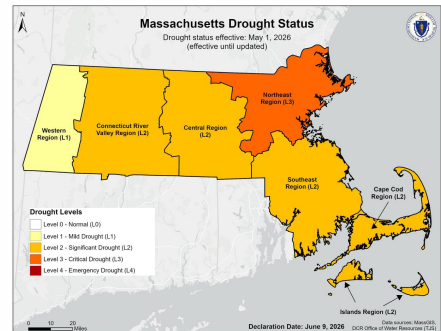
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**BOSTON** — Today, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper declared a Level – 2 Significant Drought in the Southeast, Cape Cod, and Islands Regions due to worsening dry conditions.

The designation follows two years of below-average rainfall and declining streamflow and groundwater across the state, signaling worsening drought conditions and increasing stress on local water resources.

During May, the state received between 1-3 inches of rain, which was 1.5 to 3 inches below normal. The greatest precipitation deficits were in the Berkshires, the Southeast, and Cape Cod and the Islands. Rivers and streams throughout the region are running below normal levels, even with some temporary increases right after a rain event. These decreasing levels are an indicator that groundwater levels continue to go down.

All other Regions remain at their current drought levels:

- **Level 3 – Critical Drought:** Northeast
- **Level 2 – Significant Drought:** Connecticut River Valley, Central
- **Level 1 — Mild Drought:** Western

“Many parts of the state have gone months without enough rainfall to replenish groundwater levels and stream flow,” said **Secretary Tepper**. “As we enter the summer months, it is important to be conscious of our water use by limiting outdoor watering to ensure water supplies remain available.”

As outlined in the [Massachusetts Drought Management Plan](#), a Level 3 – Critical Drought requires communities to ban all nonessential outdoor water use, and allow only hand-held watering in Level 2 – Significant Drought communities. While the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority’s (MWRA) water supply system is currently not experiencing drought conditions, it’s still important for residents and businesses served by the MWRA to conserve water.

State agencies continue coordinating drought response efforts with federal and local partners, including municipal officials and local Boards of Health (BOH). Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is providing technical assistance and outreach to communities affected by drought conditions.

Residents are encouraged to report dry environmental conditions and upload photos through the [Massachusetts Water Impact Reporter](#) to help the state monitor drought impacts in real time. Private well owners experiencing problems such as dry wells should contact their local BOH, which is also asked to [report](#) local well conditions to the state.

Additional information, including drought [FAQs](#), water conservation guidance, and resources for private well owners, is available online.

Below are recommendations for communities and individuals living and working within Level 1–Mild Drought, Level 2–Significant Drought and Level 3–Critical Drought Regions, including those utilizing a private well. Residents and businesses are strongly encouraged to check with their local water system for any additional [restrictions](#), as some communities may face more severe local water supply conditions.

- Minimize overall water use;
- Stop all non-essential outdoor watering;
- Follow state water conservation actions and any local water use restrictions;
- Monitor total household water use shown on your water bill for sudden increases, which often indicate leaks. Use the [MA Home Water Use Calculator tool](#) to evaluate household water use;
- Fix any toilet or faucet leaks immediately. Check for leaks in homes and businesses regularly by:
  - Checking water meters for constant dial movement
  - Using dye tabs to check for toilet leaks
  - Conducting regular inspections of all pipes and fixtures, including those located in utility rooms, crawlspaces, and other hidden areas
- Use dishwashers rather than handwashing dishes. Run the dishwasher only on a full load;
- Aggressively reduce indoor water use by:
  - Taking showers and avoiding baths
  - Reducing shower length and consider using a shower timer
  - Running washing machines only on a full load
  - Not letting water run while brushing and shaving
  - Replacing old fixtures and appliances with water-efficient ones. Make sure toilets, faucets, and showerheads are [WaterSense labeled](#)

### **Immediate Steps for Local Governments:**

- Adopt and implement the state's nonessential outdoor water use restrictions for drought; Level 3 restriction calls for a ban on all nonessential outdoor water use.
- Provide timely information on the drought and on water conservation tips to local residents and businesses taking advantage of the state's [library of outreach materials](#);
- Enforce water use restrictions with increasingly stringent penalties;

- Strongly discourage or prohibit installation of new sod, seeding, and/or landscaping; washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing (unless needed for invasives control); and,
- Establish or enhance 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 Local Governments:**

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

## **For Regions in Level 2 – Significant Drought**

### **Residents and Businesses:**

- Minimize overall water use;
- Follow local water use restrictions;
- For any outdoor water use, limit watering to hand-held hoses or watering cans, to be used only after 5 p.m. or before 9 a.m.;
- 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 Local Governments:**

- 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 Local Governments:**

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the states [libra 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](#).

## **For Regions in Level 1 – Mild Drought**

### **Residents and Businesses:**

- Minimize overall water use; and,
- For any outdoor water use, limit watering to one day a week (only from 5:00 pm – 9:00 am), or less frequently if required by your water supplier;
- Plant only local and drought-resistant species;
- Minimize lawn sizes; and,
- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities.

### **Local Governments:**

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state's [libra 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](#).

The DMTF will [meet](#) again on July 8, 2026 at 10 am. For further information on water conservation and what residents can do, visit the EEA's [drought](#) and [water conservation](#) pages.

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