



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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Charles D. Baker
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Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary

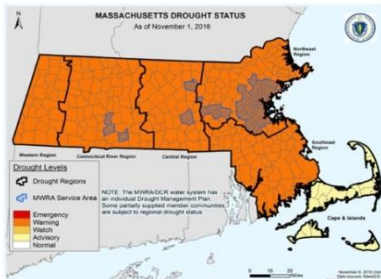
Martin Suuberg
Commissioner

November 22, 2016

To: All registered or permitted Public Water Suppliers and all other users permitted under the Water Management Act (WMA)
Re: November 2016 Drought Status Update

Although most of Massachusetts received near normal rainfall over the past month, drought conditions continue to persist over large portions of Massachusetts as rainfall longer term remains well below average. On November 1, 2016, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Matthew Beaton declared the following drought levels for the Commonwealth:

- a Drought Warning is now in place in Western Massachusetts, up from a Drought Watch in October;
- a Drought Warning continues in place for the Connecticut River Valley, Central, Northeast, and Southeast Massachusetts; and
- on the Cape and Islands conditions have improved to Drought Advisory, although the area remains abnormally dry.



The latest drought status update is published on the Web at:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/water-res-protection/water-data-tracking/drought-status.html>.

The revised declarations resulted from the recommendations issued from the November meeting of the Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force. Drought conditions will continue to be reviewed monthly, and the drought declaration will remain in effect until conditions return to normal.

As the drought persists, MassDEP has the following initiatives and guidance to help water suppliers improve their infrastructure and prepare for the months ahead, including next summer, should dry conditions continue.

Water Supply System Audits Grants MassDEP is preparing to open its American Water Works Association (AWWA) M36 Water Audit Grant Program to both WMA registrants and permittees. Previously, the program had only been open to WMA permittees. The AWWA M36 Audit methodology has been successfully implemented throughout the country, and MassDEP is piloting the AWWA M36 Audit as a common methodology for public water systems (PWSs) to identify water losses and infrastructure improvement needs and objectives. Developing a uniform approach for identifying and communicating water loss will allow PWSs and state agencies to work together to more efficiently set infrastructure and management goals that minimize water loss and non-revenue water production, prioritize the replacement of aging or failing infrastructure, and manage infrastructure assets.

All PWSs will be notified via email when the grant application process is opened. For more information, see the most recent Request for Interest (RFI) that was open only to WMA permittees (which closed on November 4, 2016) at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/grants/water-management-act-grant-program.html>.

MassDEP Water Supply Interconnections Survey MassDEP will be reviewing PWS preparedness to respond to drought or other emergency conditions through physical interconnections to other water supplies (pipes in the ground) and agreements with other suppliers on when and how emergency interconnections would be used (Memorandum of Understanding or similar agreement in place). As part of this review, MassDEP will be contacting you in the coming months to survey your interconnection options and to identify other options for accessing water during an emergency.

MassDEP's Model Outdoor Water Use By-Law/Ordinance MassDEP will update the model by-law to ensure it provides a template that adequately encompasses all outdoor water use within a community and includes measures that can help communities respond to extreme conditions like those we have experienced this past summer.

Tips for Saving Water – Outdoors and Indoors The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation has developed a one-page tip sheet on indoor and outdoor water saving ideas for homeowners. Suppliers can link to the tip sheet at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/watersupply/rainfall/tips-for-saving-water-8-18-16.pdf>, and can share it with their customers by posting it on their own website.

Flushing Programs Suppliers may consider delaying routine pipe flushing if such a delay will not adversely affect water quality. Suppliers with mandatory flushing schedules should contact your DEP Regional Drinking Water Program Chief to discuss concerns or to delay routinely scheduled pipe flushing.

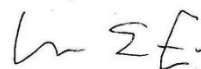
Emergency Response Plans With drought conditions persisting throughout the Commonwealth, now is a good time for PWSs to review your emergency response plan and assess your preparedness to deal with drought conditions (and other extreme weather conditions). For more information on emergency response planning, visit <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/water-systems-ops.html>.

Declaration of Water Supply Emergency MassDEP will continue to provide technical assistance to communities on managing systems and the use of emergency connections and emergency water supplies.

Any PWS having difficulty meeting demands, drought related or not, may request a Declaration of Water Supply Emergency (“Emergency Declaration”) from the Department. The provisions of the Emergency Declaration process are outlined in regulations at 310 CMR 36.40. Suppliers should contact your DEP Regional Drinking Water Program Chief (see contact information below), or Duane LeVangie of the WMA Program at (617) 292-5706, to discuss concerns or begin the Emergency Declaration process.

The Emergency Declaration will require the PWS to submit a plan for Departmental review and approval that includes provisions to remedy the emergency. Such a plan could include measures to purchase water from another supplier, use emergency sources, implement aggressive conservation measures, and provide a mechanism to restrict outside water use for those PWSs that do not currently have the ability to implement such measures.

Very truly yours,



Douglas E. Fine, Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Water Resources

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Jen Pedersen, MWWA
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