Gouveia, Susan

(C)

From: Lashway, Lisa
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 2:03 PM
To: Canning, Sean; Gouveia, Susan
Subject: FW: Important DEP Release: Water Supply Drought Watch Issued for Three New Jersey Regions
Attachments: Drought Watch -- P80.pdf; DW Information Summary for Public Officials.docx

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From: Fenderson-Singh, Nateshea [mailto:Nateshea.Fenderson-Singh@dep.nj.gov] **On Behalf Of** Randazzo, Cindy
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 1:52 PM
To: Randazzo, Cindy
Cc: Fenderson-Singh, Nateshea; Rogers, Joseph
Subject: Important DEP Release: Water Supply Drought Watch Issued for Three New Jersey Regions

Please see the attached information and below regarding the Drought Watch.

Best,

Cindy W. Randazzo
Director
Office of Local Government Assistance
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
401 E. State Street
P.O. Box 402
Trenton, NJ 08625-0402
Office: 609-633-7700
Cell – 609-575-3806
email: cindy.randazzo@dep.state.nj.us

www.nj.gov/dep/

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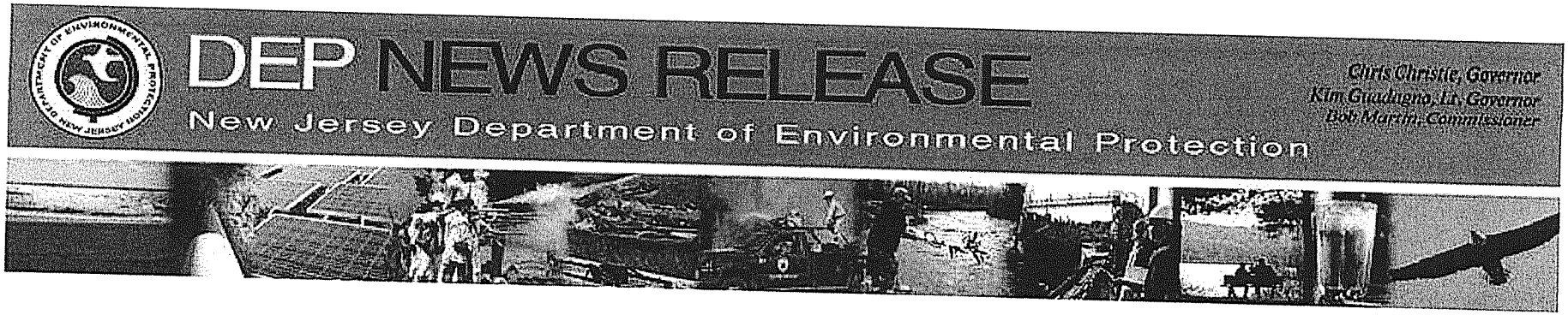


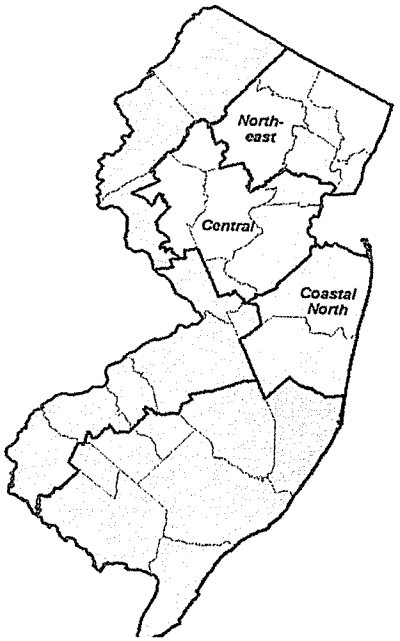
IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 23, 2015
www.nj.gov/dep

Contact: Bob Considine (609) 292-2994
Lawrence Hajna (609) 984-1795
Caryn Shinske (609) 984-1795

WATER SUPPLY DROUGHT WATCH ISSUED FOR THREE NEW JERSEY REGIONS

RESIDENTS ASKED TO VOLUNTARILY CONSERVE WATER

(15/P80) TRENTON –Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin today issued a drought watch for New Jersey's Northeast, Central, and Coastal North water supply regions, urging residents in the affected areas to voluntarily conserve water and for the rest of the state to practice wise water use due to continued dry weather and above-average temperatures.



The drought watch is prompted by continued rainfall deficits that have decreased reservoir, ground water and streamflow levels in the three regions.

The purpose of the watch is to raise public awareness, formally alert all water suppliers in the region of the situation, and to seek voluntary cooperation to preserve existing supplies in the affected regions, with water demand still high.

The three affected drought regions include all or parts of 12 counties, including Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset and Union.

"We have been carefully tracking precipitation, stream flows, ground water and reservoir levels since the spring and over the course of the very dry summer," Commissioner Martin said. "While it is not uncommon to see reduced stream flows and ground water levels by the end of the summer season, we are beginning to observe signs of stress in our water supply indicators, and this warrants closer scrutiny and public cooperation."

"We are asking residents to be aware of the situation and use water more carefully and deliberatively, especially when it comes to lawn watering and other non-essential uses. The goal is to moderate water demand through voluntary conservation."
Some suggested water conservation tips include:

- Do not over-water lawns and landscaping. Two times per week for 30 minutes in morning or late evening typically is sufficient. Use a hose with a hand-held nozzle to water flowers and shrubs.
- Avoid watering lawns and plants during the heat of the day, as this promotes evaporation and water waste.
- Use a broom to sweep the sidewalk, rather than a hose.
- To save water at home, fix leaky faucets and pipes.
- Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth and shaving.
- Run washing machines and dishwashers only when full.

The DEP has observed significant reservoir level declines in some water systems, particularly United Water New Jersey's Oradell reservoir system in Bergen County. While measurable
rainfall during the second week of September provided some temporary relief, it did not appreciably improve the water supply situation in the three drought regions. Additionally, the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center is projecting above-average temperatures and dry weather to continue through October.

United Water New Jersey serves approximately 800,000 customers in Bergen and northern Hudson counties. Although combined reservoir storage across Northeastern New Jersey is only marginally below normal for this time of year, the region is potentially vulnerable because of United Water New Jersey's reliance on other major suppliers to complement its supply when demands are unusually high. If current conditions persist, other interconnected water systems could be adversely affected if inflated demands are left unchecked.

Other drinking water supply indicators are also showing signs of stress from the dry weather and high water demands, including stream flows and ground water levels, as well as declining reservoir storage in the New Jersey Water Supply Authority's Spruce Run and Manasquan Reservoirs in Hunterdon and Monmouth counties, respectively.

While plentiful rains in June replenished reservoirs, stream flow and ground water sources, very dry, warm weather in July and August resulted in high water usage that has continued into September.

If conditions remain warm and dry and water demands do not decrease, DEP will consider further regulatory actions, such as the designation of a drought warning. Under a drought warning, the DEP may order water purveyors to develop alternative sources of water or transfer of water between areas of New Jersey with relatively more water to those with less.

"We are asking residents across the state, and particularly in the three drought watch regions, to use water sparingly, and to voluntarily reduce nonessential water use, especially outdoors," said Dan Kennedy, DEP Assistant Commissioner for Water Resources Management. "We advocate for

conservation of water at all times. But responsible water use at this time is especially important. We ask that residents take voluntary steps such as limiting lawn and landscaping watering, and cutting back on water-related chores at home, such as car washing. This could save millions of gallons of water daily."

For more state water supply status information, visit: www.njdrought.org/status.html.

For more information on water conservation, visit: www.njdrought.org/ideas.html

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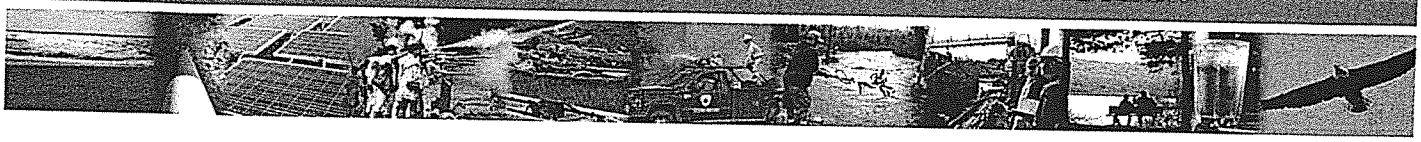
DEP NEWS RELEASE
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Chris Christie, Governor
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor
Bob Martin, Commissioner



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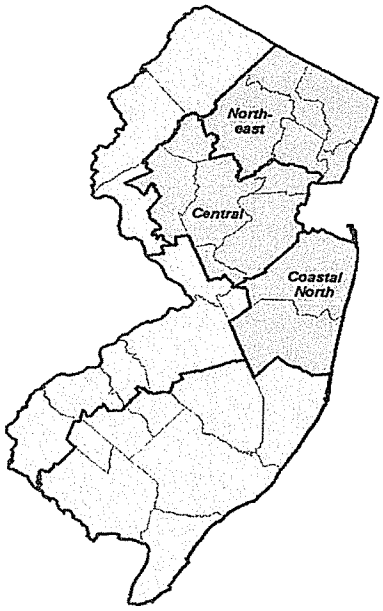

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Drought Watch Information Summary for
Public Elected Officials (Legislator/Mayor)

The DEP expects to designate a Drought Watch for the three most impacted areas of the State – the Northeast, Central and Coastal North drought regions some time tomorrow (9/23/15). The affected drought regions encompass all or parts of twelve New Jersey counties, including Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset and Union counties.

A Drought Watch is a non-regulatory action (nothing ordered or required) and is the first level of response that DEP takes when addressing dry weather conditions that begin to impact drinking water supply indicators. These indicators explained in the FAQs below are used to gauge the current level of water supply sources compared to a long-term average:

No water supply sources are in immediate jeopardy currently, but this action allows the DEP to inform the public and water suppliers alike about the dry conditions, unseasonably high water demands, and the need to voluntarily conserve water to maintain existing supplies. Intervention through the DEP's non-emergency powers now seeks to avoid a Drought Warning or Water Emergency and more drastic measures should present conditions continue (as they are forecast to do).

I've cut-and-pasted some FAQs for questions you might get from State/County/Local officials, but you can always refer folks to our dedicated Drought web site: www.njdrought.org.

1. **Q.** What is a "**drought watch**"?

   A. A drought Watch is an administrative designation made by the Department when drought or other factors begin to adversely affect water supply conditions. A Watch indicates that conditions are dry but not yet significantly so. During a drought Watch, the Department closely monitors drought indicators (including precipitation, stream flows and reservoir and ground water levels, and water demands) and consults with affected water suppliers.

   The Watch designation is used to alert the public about deteriorating conditions; at the same time, water-supply professionals are reminded to keep a close eye on conditions and update contingency plans in the event that dry conditions continue or worsen. The public is encouraged to practice wise water use in order to preserve supplies.

2. **Q.** Are State-imposed mandatory water use restrictions in place at this time?

   A. No, **mandatory** restrictions imposed by the State of New Jersey are not currently in effect. You should, however, check with your water supplier, municipality and county to ensure that no restrictions have been imposed at those levels. Furthermore, everyone should voluntarily use water wisely to help avoid the potential of a water shortage.

3. **Q.** What are the drought indicators and how are they used?

   A. The Department utilizes several drought indicators to assess the status of water supply conditions for

each of six drought regions in the State. The indicators are precipitation, stream flow, shallow ground water levels, and reservoir storage (as applicable). Each indicator is weighted according to its importance within a particular region (e.g. reservoirs are a significant factor in the Northeast drought region because they are a critical water supply source there).

The indicators are ranked according to the status of current conditions relative to a statistical average. Each is then evaluated as either: near/above normal, moderately dry, severely dry, or extremely dry. The indicators are one set of factors the Department uses to determine if a drought-related administrative action (i.e. watch, warning, or emergency) is warranted.

4. **Q.** What can I do to conserve water?

A. Using water wisely can stretch existing supplies a long way and may avert the need for mandatory water use restrictions. The majority of water is used outside the home during summer to irrigate lawn and landscapes; unfortunately, much of that water is not used efficiently and ultimately is wasted.

- Watering your lawn once or twice per week for no more than 30 minutes is more than adequate to sustain your lawn. **If it rains, there is no need to water.** Also, watering your lawn after sunset and before 8:00 a.m. avoids excessive evaporation and reduces water waste.
- Remember to check for local water use restrictions as well as guidance from your water supplier. Often such restrictions allow for you to water on odd or even numbered days of the month, depending on your address.
- To save water and money in the home, fix leaky faucets and pipes, and turn off the faucet while brushing teeth and shaving. Install water conserving faucets and showerheads. Run washing machines and dishwashers only when full.
- A complete list of water conservation tips appears on the NJ Drought web page (www.njdrought.org).