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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**July 12, 2022**

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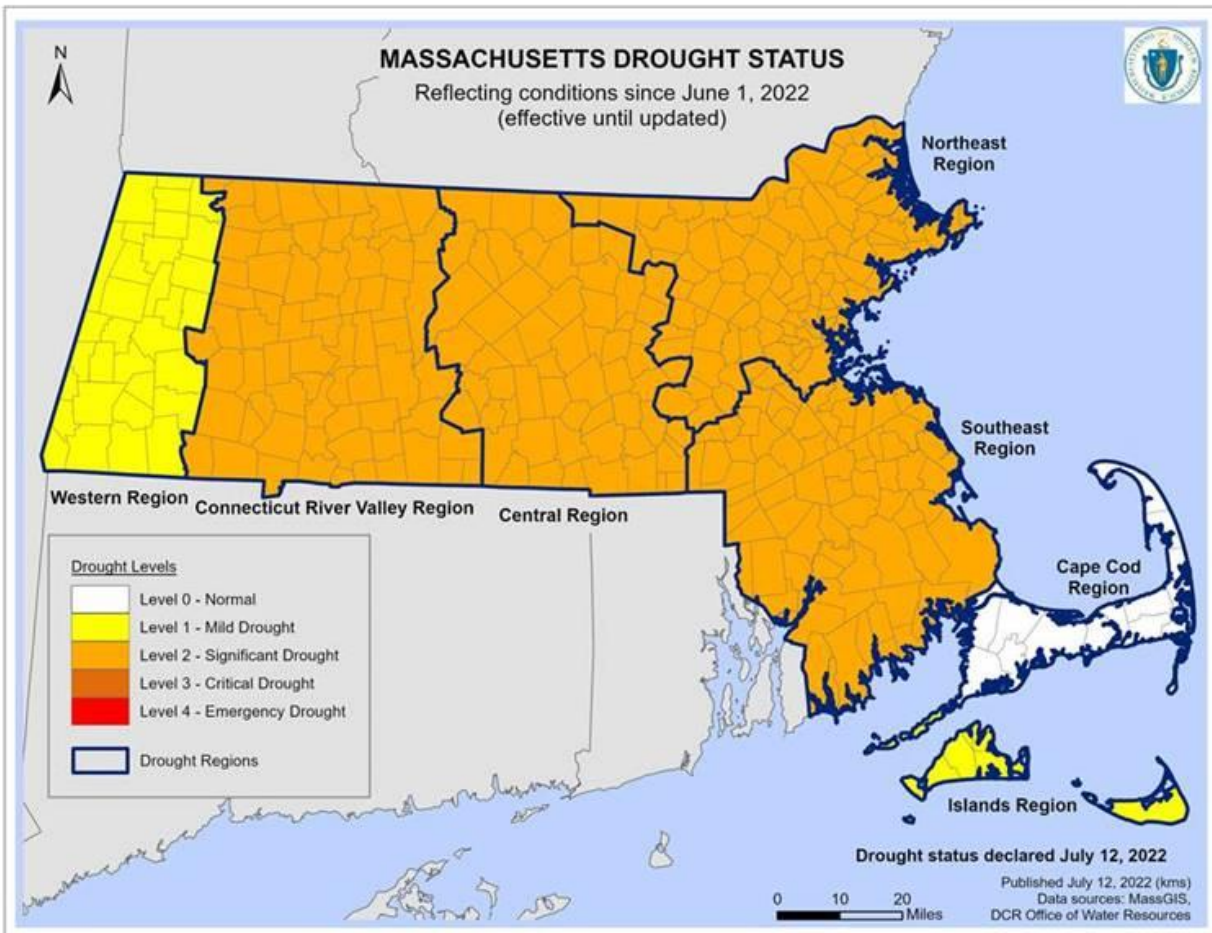
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## Majority of State Experiencing Ongoing Drought Conditions

*Northeast, Southeast, CT River Valley, and Central Regions Declared Significant Drought*



**BOSTON** — With 90 percent of Massachusetts experiencing drought conditions, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Beth Card today declared a Level 2-Significant Drought in the Northeast, Southeast, Connecticut River Valley, and Central Regions of the state. Additionally, the Islands Region will remain at Level 1-Mild Drought along with the Western Region that elevated from Normal conditions last month. At this time, the Cape Cod Region will remain in Level 0-Normal conditions. As outlined in the [Massachusetts Drought Management Plan](#), a Level 2-Significant Drought warrants the convening of an inter-agency Mission Group, which has already been convened, to more closely coordinate on drought assessments, impacts and response within the government. A Level 1-Mild Drought warrants detailed monitoring of drought conditions, close coordination among state and federal agencies, and technical outreach and assistance to the affected municipalities.

“As the state continues to experience dry conditions, and with little rainfall expected in the immediate forecast, it is important that we all implement water conservation practices to reduce stress on our local water supply systems and our natural habitats,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Beth Card.** “The Baker-Polito Administration will continue to work closely with its municipal partners and local water suppliers as we further monitor ongoing drought conditions and address its impacts, particularly on the agricultural sector.”

“As the drought conditions worsen across parts of the Commonwealth, MEMA reminds residents to exercise caution when using charcoal grills, backyard fire pits, and other open flame outdoor activities to prevent outdoor fires,” **said Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Acting Director Dawn Brantley.** “Residents can also assist during the drought by minimizing water usage and following any local water restrictions for their area.”

Since the start of June 2022, hydrological conditions have continued to decline across the state and in particular in the northern half of the Commonwealth. Significantly, the drought has been both spreading and intensifying, with indices dropping more rapidly due to lack of precipitation over the past several months. Additionally, fire danger in the northern half of the state is steadily on the rise, with noticeable drought stress on foliage in shrubs and grasses. It is expected that low dew point and higher evapotranspiration may continue to impact the drought in the coming weeks as the state will experience the hottest time of the year. Furthermore, streamflow has been severely impacted across the Commonwealth, with dry stream beds and ponding visible in many locations. Ongoing drought conditions are also impacting growers, including local farms, with some farmers irrigating more heavily due to the lack of precipitation.

Important to note, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water supply system is not currently experiencing drought conditions, as defined within its individual plan. However, private wells, local streams, wetlands, vernal pools, and other water-dependent habitats located within MWRA-serviced areas will be impacted by drought conditions while water quality in ponds can deteriorate due to lowering of levels and stagnation.

Individuals living and working within a Level 2 – Significant Drought and Level 1 – Mild Drought region, including residents utilizing a private well, are asked to take the following actions:

**For Region 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 5:00PM or before 9:00AM.

**Immediate Steps for Communities:**

- Adopt and implement the state’s nonessential outdoor water use restrictions for drought.
- Limit or prohibit installation of new sod, seeding, and/or landscaping; washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; operation of non-recirculating fountains; filling of swimming pools, hot tubs, and backyard informal rinks.
- Implement drought or seasonal water rates.
- Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users and identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use.

**Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities:**

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication;
- Provide timely information to local residents and businesses;
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and
- Develop or revisit your local drought management plan for water supply.

**For Region in Level 1 - Mild Drought-****Residents and Businesses:**

- Toilets, faucets and showers are more than 60% of indoor use. Make sure yours are WaterSense efficient.
- Limit outdoor watering to 1 day a week (only from 5:00PM – 9:00AM), or less frequently if required by your water supplier

**Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities:**

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication;
- Provide timely information to local residents and businesses;
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and
- Develop a local drought management plan for water supply (click [here](#) for more information).

Taking water conservation steps now will greatly help reduce water use to ensure essential needs, such as drinking water and fire protection, are being met, habitats have enough water to support their natural functions, and to sustain the Commonwealth’s water supplies in the long-term. Additionally, the Commonwealth will continue to monitor and assess current conditions and any associated environmental and agricultural impacts, coordinate any needed dissemination of information to the public, and help state, federal and local agencies prepare additional responses that may be needed in the future. Furthermore, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will continue to provide technical assistance to communities on managing systems, including emergency connections and water supplies assistance.

“Dry conditions continue to affect a major part of the Commonwealth and in a time of year when our rivers and streams are normally at their lowest, it is even more important to conserve in order to protect water supplies and our natural resources,” **said MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg.** “People should be aware of, and follow, conservation measures put into place by their local water systems.”

The Drought Management Task Force will [meet](#) again on Monday, August 8, 2022, at 1:00PM. For further information on water conservation and what residents can do, please visit EEA's drought [page](#) and water conservation [page](#). To get the most up-to-date information on the drought indices, go to the state's [drought dashboard](#) page.

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