

August 17, 2021

Dear Water Suppliers in a Watershed with **Extreme Drought** Conditions,

With 42 percent of Minnesota now experiencing at least [extreme drought](#) and seven percent experiencing exceptional drought, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has determined that the Mississippi Headwaters, Red River, and Rainy River watersheds are now in the drought Restrictive Phase. With this designation, the DNR and others are taking additional steps such as restricting some water uses.

Water Supplier Actions Needed

The [State Drought Plan](#) specifies actions that water suppliers are required to implement once a watershed is elevated to drought RESTRICTIVE Phase.

1. **Population over 1,000** - Public water suppliers implement appropriate water use restrictions contained in their Water Supply Plan.
 - a. Public water supply permit holders, serving over 1,000 people, must have a drinking water supply plan that includes conservation measures and demand reduction efforts that must be implemented during times of drought.
 - b. Communities that received this DNR notice to begin implementing these measures are required to implement some water conservation measures.
 - c. The specific measures to be implemented are up to the community.
 - d. Your plan can be found in your MPARS account, under the Attachments tab.
 - e. Begin implementing your Water Supply demand reduction measures in Plan Part 2 (Table 22). These actions can be supported by measures that are identified in the Water Supply Plan, Part 3 Water Conservation.
2. **All Water Suppliers** - Public water suppliers will implement water use reduction actions with a goal of reducing water use to 25% above January levels.
 - a. The specific measures to be implemented are up to the community. Cities are not required to meet the 25% above January water use, but that is the goal you need to strive for.
 - b. There is no penalty for not reaching the goal, but all cities that have received this DNR notification that they are in a watershed with Extreme Drought should be making efforts to reduce water use.
 - c. For example: A city uses 4 million gallons of water in January, and normally uses 6.8 million in August. During the Restrictive phase they should only use 5 million gallons in August.
 - d. Websites with water conservation messages: DNR [Water Conservation webpage](#) and <https://www.ready.gov/drought>

We realize this is an aggressive goal. Significant demand reduction is achievable by restricting or banning non-essential outdoor water use, especially lawn irrigation, power washing buildings, car washing and swimming pool filling. In extreme drought, encourage everyone to allow lawns to dieback in favor of preserving trees, vegetable and flower gardens. Encourage customers to fix leaks, install water saving devices and water-efficient

appliances. Have conversations with your biggest water users and ask them how they might reduce water use, especially during peak times.

Use a variety of communication methods: Large exterior signs around the community, mailing/emailing all customers, radio station announcements, Facebook posts or other social media, and news release to any local paper. Explain the critical situation and that you need everyone's help. Ask customers to conserve water as much as possible.

Other Suggestions:

- During times of Extreme drought, monitor your water levels closely. Keep in mind that water quality may be impacted by increased concentrations of contaminants.
- Please alert your local [DNR hydrologists](#) to any water supply concerns or issues during the summer.
- [Sign up](#) to receive GovDelivery updates about drought in Minnesota, drought preparations and response, and important ways to conserve water.

Best regards,

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