



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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Lt. Governor

SHAWN M. LATOURETTE

Commissioner

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2024-15

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey holds all natural resources in trust for the benefit of its people, including all water resources within the boundaries of the State, which are comprised of springs, streams, and bodies of surface and groundwater, whether natural or artificial, as well as the ocean and its estuaries to the seaward limit of the State's jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the State Commissioner of Environmental Protection serves as the Trustee of all natural resources of the State with a possessory interest to protect the same, and a fiduciary duty to the people of New Jersey to ensure their good care, including the aforementioned water resources, which are essential public assets critical to the health, safety, economic wellbeing, recreational and aesthetic enjoyment, and general welfare of all New Jersey residents; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Water Supply Management Act, N.J.S.A. 58:1A-1 *et seq.*, and the attendant Water Supply Allocation Rules, N.J.A.C. 7:19, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is responsible for ensuring that water resources are planned for and managed as a common resource to provide an adequate supply and quality of water for all New Jerseyans, and is obligated to seek to prevent and respond to water supply emergencies; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned authorities obligate DEP to exercise its non-emergency water supply management powers to reduce the likelihood or impacts of an impending water shortage; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey has experienced below-average precipitation for five of the last six months, no measurable rain fell in New Jersey during October 2024, each month of 2024 has been marked by above average temperatures, the summer of 2024 was the third warmest on record, and these conditions have contributed to decreased stream flows, low groundwater levels, below normal water supply reservoir storages, and above average water consumer demands; and

WHEREAS, due to below normal precipitation, the deterioration of drinking water supply indicators, and a continuation of elevated water demands, the potential for the development of a more serious water supply situation exists; and

WHEREAS, in considering a declaration of a statewide Drought Warning conditions, DEP held a public hearing on November 12, 2024, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:19-13.1(d); and

WHEREAS, during a Drought Warning, and as may be necessitated based on localized water supply conditions, DEP may order water providers to develop alternative water supplies, rehabilitate and activate interconnections, complete interconnection flow tests, transfer water from

any public or nonpublic water system, and/or any other modifications or measures to ensure adequate water supply consistent with the aforementioned authorities; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:19-2.14(a)6, the DEP includes conditions for passing flow requirements within water supply allocation permits, which require a minimum prescribed flow of water to pass by designated points in waterbodies to promote water quality conditions after consideration of the needs of downstream users; and

WHEREAS, modifications to passing flow requirements and reservoir releases are designed to increase and preserve storage in affected reservoir systems and are necessary to preserve the State's water supply resources to meet existing and future demands for potable water, and to reduce the likelihood or severity of a water supply emergency; and

WHEREAS, all New Jersey residents, businesses, and governmental units are now called on to voluntarily conserve water.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Shawn M. LaTourette, Commissioner of Environmental Protection, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Water Supply Management Act, N.J.S.A. 58:1A-1 *et seq.*, and the Water Supply Allocation Rules adopted pursuant thereto, N.J.A.C. 7:19, and under all applicable statutes and regulations, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. All regions of New Jersey are hereby declared to be in a "Drought Warning."
2. Water supply indicators for each drought region (Northeast, Northwest, Central, Southwest, Coastal North and Coastal South) and a list of municipalities within each region shall be routinely updated and maintained at <https://dep.nj.gov/drought>.
3. The following reservoir releases are modified:

Location	Current (MGD/CFS)	Modified (MGD/CFS)	WAP Reference
Wanaque River at Wanaque	10/15.5	7.7/12	# 5329
Boonton at Rockaway River	7.9/12.4	5.2/8	#5268
Oradell (Hackensack River at New Milford)	8.3/12.8	3.3/5.1	#5082X
Spruce Run Reservoir	5/7.4	1.7/2.6	#4007PS

MGD = million gallons per day CFS = cubic feet per second

4. The following passing flow requirements are modified:

Location	Current (MGD/CFS)	Modified (MGD/CFS)	WAP Reference
Ramapo River at Pompton Lakes	40/61.9	10/15.5	# 5274



Pompton River at Pompton Plains	88/136	68/105	#5099X
Passaic River at Chatham	75/116	55/85.1	#5008X
Passaic River at Two Bridges	92.6/143	80/124	#5094X
Passaic River at Little Falls	17.6/27.2	13.6/21.1	#5099X
Rahway River at Rahway	5.1/7.9	2.6/4	#5339
Raritan River at Stanton	40/61.9	29.7/46	#4007PS #4008PS
Raritan River at Manville	70/108	61.4/95	
Raritan River at Bound Brook	90/139	70/108.3	
Manasquan River at WSA Intake	7.8/12.1	6/9.3	#4034PSX
Shark River at Neptune City	1.2/1.9	0.8/1.2	#5018X
Jumping Brook at Neptune City	0.8/1.2	0.5/0.8	
North Branch Metedeconk River near Lakewood	9/13.9	7/10.8	# 5172


5. These reductions to reservoir releases and passing flows and any further modification thereto are subject to evaluation of downstream conditions, and maintenance of associated passing flows and water quality.
6. These modified reservoir releases and passing flows shall remain in place until otherwise revised by any future order or directive. The Director of the DEP Division of Water Supply and Geoscience (Director) and/or her designee(s) shall coordinate with water providers to assess the potential for water quality degradation associated with any reductions or transfers of water hereby ordered.
7. Water providers shall, to the fullest extent practicable, utilize alternate sources of supply including their own, to the extent not in conflict with applicable permit conditions and/or as modified by this or any future order or directive. The Director may also compel water providers to undertake water transfers or service substitutions to ensure sustained operations within and across regions.
8. The Director shall take such actions as necessary to prepare for and facilitate the transfer of water between the Central and Northeast regions via the Virginia Street Interconnection/Pump Station, and any other practicable means of conveyance.



9. Water providers shall implement leak detection and repair programs to the fullest extent practicable.
10. Water providers shall identify, exercise and, if necessary, repair water supply interconnections to ensure their proper functioning to facilitate any ordered water transfers.
11. Water providers may exceed annual groundwater diversion limits upon request and subsequent approval in writing by the Director. The Director may revoke such approval at any time.
12. The Director is authorized to act on my behalf in the implementation and modification of Drought Warning requirements, as provided under N.J.A.C. 7:19, during the pendency of the Drought Warning in any designated areas.

This order, which applies to all water providers in the State, shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until such time as water supply indicators improve as determined by the Director.

Dated: November 13, 2024


Shawn M. LaTourette
Commissioner

