

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has placed 14 counties in North, Central and Northern Coastal New Jersey under a drought warning due to ongoing precipitation deficits and deteriorating water-supply conditions, particularly storage levels in reservoirs.

DEP Commissioner Bob Martin signed an Administrative Order on October 21, 2016 designating the drought warning for Morris, Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren Counties.

This designation enables DEP to more closely manage reservoir systems by directing water transfers among systems, controlling releases from reservoirs, and modifying the rate of flow in streams and rivers in order to balance ecological protection and needs of water suppliers.

The goal of the drought warning is to preserve and balance available water supplies in an effort to avert more serious water shortages in the future. The warning also reinforces the need for residents and businesses in impacted counties to conserve water.

“The situation in our reservoir systems is becoming more critical, with some systems dropping to half their capacity or less,” Commissioner Martin said. “Without knowing how much precipitation we are going to get over the fall and winter to replenish our water sources, it is vital that every resident and business step up efforts to voluntarily reduce water use in the hopes of averting a water emergency and mandatory restriction.”

Franklin Township strongly encourages all residents to eliminate unnecessary water use and is offering a limited supply of toilet leak detection tablets at the Franklin Township Municipal Building to help residents do their part to conserve. A leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water per day, and a quick and easy fix can save you money and our community’s vital water supplies. Here are a few additional tips to save water:

- Don’t let the faucet run while brushing, shaving or washing the dishes.
- Run your washing machines and dishwashers only when full.
- Install water-saving showerheads and faucet aerators.
- Fix leaky faucets.
- Don’t wash your car at home – a car wash uses less water and recycles it, too.
- With the end of the growing season, be sure to turn off automatic lawn and garden sprinkler systems.

For more state water supply status information and to view the Administrative Order, visit: www.njdrought.org.

For more information on ways to conserve water, visit www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/conserve.htm.