



**For Immediate Release**

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**For More Information:**

Av Harris [av.harris@ct.gov](mailto:av.harris@ct.gov)  
(860) 250-8391

## **DPH REINFORCES LOWER FAIRFIELD COUNTY RESIDENTS WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES DUE TO DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

### **RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO CUT NONESSENTIAL WATER USAGE BY 20% - SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE WATERING OF LAWNS AND OTHER MEASURES**

**HARTFORD** - The Department of Public Health (DPH) today is reinforcing local government and Water Company messaging to residents of lower Fairfield County – specifically those living in Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, and Westport – to assure conservation measures are taken to reduce water usage by 20% due to drought conditions.

On October 5, 2020, the Connecticut Interagency Drought Workgroup announced a Stage 3 drought for Hartford, Tolland, Windham, and New London counties. A Stage 3 drought is an emerging drought event potentially impacting water supplies, agriculture, or natural ecosystems. Fairfield county as well as the entire state of Connecticut was placed on a Stage 1 drought declaration in June. While Fairfield County remains in Stage 1 drought, water conservation measures are critical to reduce usage of the drinking water supplies that supply the southwest portion of Connecticut.

Taking simple actions to reduce demand on the public water supply in the region could help stabilize the reservoirs that feed into the regional water system. The combination of the lack of rain and higher than average demands throughout the summer months across south west Fairfield county has required regional water supplier Aquarion to ask customers to reduce nonessential water usage by 20% in addition to its mandatory, twice-weekly irrigation schedule. While towns within the county are experiencing early stages of drought and dryness, the water usage remains at an all-time high level of demand and is accelerating the impacts of drought conditions on the reservoirs' water supply capacity.

These conservation measures could help in preventing a third drought trigger being hit and further watering restrictions from being enacted. Also, private well owners in the area should also adhere to the call to conserve due to the dry conditions that effect water availability for private residential wells.

“Connecticut has been in a drought for some time, and every resident – especially those in lower Fairfield County – can do their part to reduce demand on some of the public water systems and conserve this vital resource,” said acting DPH Commissioner Deidre S. Gifford, MD MPH. “We are experiencing a combination of dry weather, lower than normal precipitation this summer, and likely because of that higher

than normal demand for water due to outdoor water use. This is straining water supply sources. I encourage residents to take simple steps to cut their water usage such as taking shorter showers, adhering to the calls to severely reduce lawn watering or shutting down lawn irrigation systems altogether. We can make a big difference and conserve water in the reservoirs if each of us take these small steps. Private well owners should also be mindful to cut back on non-essential water use to conserve their own water source”

As a result of high demand in water usage and a lack of significant rainfall in the forecast, the Department of Public Health recommends enacting water conservation measures within southwest Fairfield County as well as across the state while the weather situation continues to be an ongoing cause of dryness. You can make a difference by curtailing any unnecessary outdoor water use. This is especially important in this dry time for private well owners who might run their well dry if overused

**DPH recommends the following water conservation measures for both public water users and private well owners:**

- Turn off the sprinkler system for the season. If you must water your lawn, only do it once weekly.
- Postpone the planting of any new lawns or vegetation. If you must plant, choose drought resistant varieties
- Refrain from unnecessary or wasteful uses of water, such as the rinsing of sidewalks, driveways, and patios
- Run dishwashers and washing machines with full loads.
- Don't leave the faucet running unnecessarily when washing dishes, shaving, brushing teeth, and washing hands.
- Take shorter showers. Consider reducing your shower time by one minute each day until you are taking a five-minute shower.
- Avoid power washing buildings and washing vehicles.
- Fix leakages that you may find around the home or business.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, DPH is still strongly encouraging water usage for sanitary purposes such as hand washing to reduce the spread of the virus.