



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

PO Box 47600 • Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000
711 for Washington Relay Service • Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341

ORDER AND DETERMINATION BY THE DIRECTOR

Washington State's economy, food, and environment are all linked to the abundance and health of its water supplies. Regional climate and water supply conditions have been highly variable this year. Despite significant lowland snow and the coldest temperatures in recent memory during late winter, snowpack is now much below average, reflecting drier than normal conditions. Averaged statewide, mountain precipitation ranks as the 6th lowest in the past 30 years. Snowpack is the 5th lowest over the same time period. Conditions vary significantly throughout the state, with watersheds in the northern half of the state experiencing the least favorable conditions.

The state Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC) is responsible for reviewing water supply conditions and forecasts for watersheds across the state and supplying their assessment to the Executive Water Emergency Committee. The WSAC determined the following:

- 1) The Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Weather Service Northwest River Forecast Center provide seasonal water supply forecasts. These forecasts indicate that some watersheds have a high chance of meeting the state's hydrologic threshold for drought conditions, which is when a geographic area will receive less than 75 percent of normal water supply.
- 2) Forecasts adjust as conditions evolve, but there is now good confidence regarding water supply for this summer. Across the state, total runoff from mountain snow melt is likely to be in the bottom 10 to 20 percent of levels observed over the past 70 years.
- 3) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center predicts warmer and drier conditions this spring. There is a low likelihood that water supply conditions will improve to normal levels.

The second primary consideration for determining whether drought conditions are anticipated or existing is whether the shortage in water supplies creates risks of undue hardships for water users and uses. In years of extreme low runoff, hardships may include:

- 1) Lack of water supply for irrigators of high value, permanent crops, such as tree fruit, which cannot tolerate interruption of water supply.
- 2) Lack of water to help crops and animals cope with heat stress.
- 3) Declining water levels in wells and impoundments used to supply public drinking water.

- 4) Stranding of fish and blocking of migratory corridors for salmon and other fish, as well as lethal water temperatures.

Based upon the recommendations of the Executive Water Emergency Committee, I find that the potential for such conditions exist in the Methow, Okanogan, and Upper Yakima Watersheds.

Water Resource Inventory Area/WRIA Number	Percent of Normal Water Supply Forecasted for APR-SEPT
Upper Yakima - 39	74
Methow - 48	72
Okanogan - 49	60

Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of RCW 43.83B.405, IT IS ORDERED that the above listed Water Resource Inventory Areas are hereby under a drought emergency. This order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for 12 months from today's date unless terminated earlier.

In accordance with the provisions of WAC 173-166-060, the Department of Ecology may, under the terms of this order, take the following emergency actions:

1. Issue emergency permits for water.
2. Approve temporary transfers of water rights.
3. Provide funding assistance to public agencies to alleviate drought conditions.
4. Take other actions depending on future developments in drought conditions.

Other state and local agencies with authority to issue permits or authorizations related to the drought emergency actions must provide a decision to an applicant within 15 calendar days of the date of application.

In accordance with the proclamation of the Washington Governor, dated January 3, 1989, (Centennial Accord), nothing herein shall impair or infringe upon the treaty reserved rights or governmental authority of any federally recognized Indian tribe nor shall this order be deemed an assertion of state authority over Indian reservation lands. The Department of Ecology intends to work cooperatively, on a government-to-government basis, with all affected tribes.

Further details about this order or the actions available under it, may be obtained by contacting:

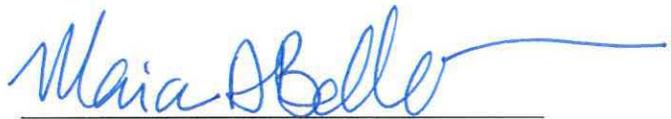
Jeff Marti
Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
360-407-6627
jeff.marti@ecy.wa.gov

Order and Determination by the Director
April 4, 2019
Page 3

Applications for emergency water permits or temporary transfers of water rights are available by contacting the Department of Ecology's Central Regional office:

Central Region Office
Yakima, WA
Office: 509-454-4240
Email: trevor.hutton@ecy.wa.gov

DATED this 4th day of April, 2019.



Maia D. Bellon, Director

