

CONNECTICUT INTERAGENCY DROUGHT WORKGROUP: NEW LONDON COUNTY JOINS FOUR OTHER CONNECTICUT COUNTIES EXPERIENCING STAGE 2 DROUGHT CONDITIONS

(Hartford) – As one of the hottest summers on record in Connecticut draws to a close, five Connecticut counties are experiencing the effects of prolonged precipitation deficits. According to Connecticut’s Interagency Drought Workgroup, New London county is the latest area of the state to experience conditions consistent with a Stage 2 drought, which is an emerging drought event potentially impacting water supplies, agriculture, or natural ecosystems. A Stage 2 drought for Litchfield, Hartford, Tolland, and Windham counties was [announced](#) on August 26th.

Conditions in eastern Connecticut have deteriorated rapidly in recent weeks, with plummeting streamflow and groundwater levels following a particularly dry August and first half of September. Fire fighters throughout the region have responded to numerous reports of wildland fires, including a Windham fire that consumed 94 acres before being fully contained. The dry nature of the soil subsurface means that any fires that ignite are difficult to extinguish completely, since they often smolder below ground, well out of reach. Residents are reminded to monitor daily forest fire danger reports and plan outdoor burning accordingly.

To ensure drinking water supplies remain adequate if the drought persists, residents and businesses in Stage 2 counties are being asked to voluntarily take the following measures:

- Reduce outdoor irrigation and other non-essential outdoor uses of water
- Postpone the planting of any new lawns or vegetation (if new plantings cannot be postponed, consider drought-tolerant species)
- Minimize overall water use by fixing leaky plumbing and fixtures
- Follow conservation requests or mandates issued by public water systems, municipalities, or state agencies

Stage 2 is the second of five stages of drought defined in the Connecticut Drought Response and Preparedness Plan. If rainfall continues to be in short supply, the Interagency Drought Workgroup may recommend elevating the affected counties to Stage 3, necessitating more stringent conservation and mitigation measures.

The Interagency Drought Workgroup consists of representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Department of Public Health, Office of Policy and Management, and Public Utilities Regulatory Authority, with assistance from the National Weather Service and United States Geological Survey. More information on the Interagency Drought Workgroup and the State Drought Plan are available [here](#).

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