



The Metropolitan District

water supply • environmental services • geographic information

## MDC ISSUES DROUGHT ADVISORY

*Reservoirs at 75% of capacity*

December 22, 2016

For Immediate Release

**(HARTFORD, CT)** – As a result of the lack of beneficial rainfall, the Metropolitan District's (MDC) drinking water reservoir supply stands at approximately 75% of capacity, which, assuming no rain at all and continued normal daily water usage, equates to approximately 500 days of supply in storage. As part of its Water Supply Plan, the MDC is required to notify customers, municipalities and regulatory agencies through this "Drought Advisory" when its reservoirs reach this point.

The MDC's service area consists of the member towns of Bloomfield, East Hartford, Hartford, Newington, Rocky Hill, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor. The MDC also supplies treated water to portions of Cromwell, East Granby, Farmington, Glastonbury, Manchester and South Windsor. Additionally, the MDC has agreements to sell water to the Town of Portland and Connecticut Water Company, which serves customers in Unionville and Collinsville. The MDC also has emergency interconnections with the towns of New Britain, Berlin and Windsor Locks.

The MDC's water supply is unique in that it consists exclusively of a surface water supply system of reservoirs that includes the 30.3 billion gallon Barkhamsted Reservoir and the 9.5 billion gallon Nepaug Reservoir. Barkhamsted Reservoir is the single largest drinking water reservoir in the State of Connecticut. MDC does not utilize ground water sources, such as aquifers, for its water supply. Surface reservoirs are much more capable of collecting rapid runoff from less frequent but larger rain events during dry ground conditions. Because of the large depth and size of its reservoirs relative to the amount of water typically used, the MDC is better able to sustain normal operations during drought conditions.

Like all water utilities in Connecticut, the MDC adopts a Water Supply Plan that is reviewed and approved, through a public process, by the Department of Public Health (DPH). Very conservative drought triggers have been established by the MDC as part of our approved Water Supply Plan for drought planning. There are specific conservation measures the MDC requests of its customers when reservoir water storage levels fall below certain percentages of full capacity, which are referred to as "trigger points". The five drought trigger points established by the MDC and approved by DPH are 75%, 53%, 40%, 27% and 10% of reservoir capacity. Each trigger point represents a different drought level condition, each with its own set of recommended action items and potential conservation steps that would be requested or required of MDC customers.

Under the current Drought Advisory there are no water use restrictions for individual customers. However, the MDC requests that municipal officials look to cut back on water use for non-essential operations such as street cleaning, municipal watering and vehicle washing. The MDC is already taking similar steps by suspending vehicle washing and limiting hydrant flushing operations.

It is important to note that, in addition to its own customers, the MDC is party to an interconnection agreement with the City of New Britain. Under the terms of this 1958 agreement, the MDC is obligated to furnish New Britain with untreated water up to an annual average of 5 million gallons per day, not to exceed 10 million gallons in any one day, when requested.

MDC was advised by the City of New Britain that due to their current drought conditions and low water supply reservoir levels, they planned to utilize the existing interconnection with the MDC. New Britain started withdrawing water from MDC's reservoirs on December 1st. Therefore, in addition to MDC supporting more than 400,000 people in the greater Hartford region, MDC is now supplementing New Britain's supply to the City and its customers in the region, which includes the communities of Bristol and Berlin - an additional population of more than 87,700.

The additional withdrawal of water for New Britain and its customers may accelerate the date on which MDC reaches its second drought trigger. If the drought continues throughout the winter months, withdrawal of water for New Britain would reduce the time before the MDC reaches the second trigger in its contingency plan, the “Drought Watch” stage, which would be activated when reservoir levels fall to 53% of capacity.

Assuming no further precipitation, the MDC currently projects that this second drought trigger would be reached in approximately late May of 2017. Given the unknown duration of the drought and amount of future precipitation, MDC will continue to store water within our emergency water source of the West Branch Reservoir, a possible drinking water source as outlined in our approved drought contingency plan. MDC is responsible to act in the best interest of its customers and member municipalities by remaining proactive and following a very conservative drought contingency plan. The MDC will ensure we can accommodate not only our water obligations to the Hartford region, but also put the MDC drinking water and emergency reservoirs’ supply in a position to be able to support the New Britain region as necessary throughout this drought period.

MDC CEO Scott Jellison stated, “While water conservation is always prudent, and there are currently no mandatory water use restrictions for individual MDC customers. Even with the request for water from New Britain, the MDC is fully capable of meeting expected demands, and we want our customers to be assured the MDC is in contact with all appropriate regulatory authorities monitoring the drought conditions.”

The MDC asks its customers to use water wisely by following basic water saving tips for everyday use such as:

- Repair leaky toilets and fix leaky faucets.
- Run dishwashers and washing machines with full loads.
- Replace old fixtures and appliances with new water efficient ones.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- Don’t run faucets when you brush your teeth or shave.

The MDC will continue to monitor weather conditions and reservoir levels and will advise customers when conditions warrant any water use restrictions in our service area.

For additional information on water saving tips: <https://themdc.org/what-we-do/drinking-water/water-tips>

For information on our reservoir levels: <https://themdc.org/what-we-do/drinking-water/water-supply>

**About the MDC:** *The MDC is a nonprofit municipal corporation chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1929. The MDC provides water, sewer and household hazardous waste collection services to its member municipalities: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Hartford, Newington, Rocky Hill, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor. In addition, the District supplies treated water to portions of Glastonbury, South Windsor, Farmington, East Granby and Portland.*

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