

## **Water Supply Conditions Summary – July 27, 2016**

### Drought Watch Issued for Three Northern New Jersey Regions

A persistent hot, dry weather pattern, which has been stressing water supply indicators across the State's northern tier over the past few months, prompted the issuance of a Drought Watch on July 25, 2016, for the Northeast, Northwest and Central Drinking-Water-Supply regions. The affected drought regions include twelve New Jersey counties – Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren.

The purpose of a drought watch is to raise public awareness, formally alert all water suppliers in the affected regions, and seek voluntary cooperation to reduce water use and preserve existing supplies. The goal is to reduce excessive water use in the event dry weather persists. With a little cooperation and being mindful of how we use water each day can save millions of gallons per day.

In the three regions under Drought Watch, stream flows and shallow ground water levels are rated as “severely dry”, the next-to-lowest category. Overall, reservoir storage is in fairly good shape, although levels in key systems in the Northeast and Central regions are below average and dropping more steeply than normal. This is due to hot weather, extremely high customer demands, and evaporation.

While no adverse impacts to drinking water supplies exist at this time, the compromised streamflow and ground water levels point to the potential of a developing water supply shortage if left unchecked. Without much-needed rainfall in key areas over the coming weeks, further actions may be needed to preserve an adequate water supply. The hope for now is that well-placed rainfall and moderated customer demands will extend supplies through the summer months.

As always, DEP is closely monitoring conditions to plan for and recommend appropriate administrative actions. It is important to stress that being mindful of our water use, both in and outdoors, is critical to stretching supplies and possibly avoiding the need for restrictions being put in place later. For tips on using water efficiently around the home or office, go to <http://njdrought.org/ideas.html>.