

April 27, 2026

**RE: Level 1 Drought Response Declaration**

Dear EPD Permit Holder:

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has been monitoring climatic indicators and water supply conditions to assess drought and severity, as directed by the Drought Management Rule adopted in June 2015. **The entire state is under various classifications of drought conditions, including D4 (Exceptional Drought) and D3 (Extreme Drought) conditions affecting the majority of the state's territory** ([US Drought Monitor Map for Georgia](#)).

As EPD Director, because of these drought conditions, I am declaring a State-wide Level 1 Drought Response for public water systems that use surface water and/or groundwater.

A Level 1 Drought Response requires that public water systems implement a public information campaign that shall include, at a minimum, public notice regarding drought conditions and drought-specific public service messages in one or more of the following ways: newspaper advertisements, bill inserts, website homepage, social media, and notices in public libraries.

A Level 1 Drought Response public information campaign should target all commercial and residential water use, not just outdoor watering; and emphasize what customers should be good stewards of our water resources. It should not focus on what they cannot do. Examples of things to emphasize include:

- **Regularly check for, and repair, leaks inside and outside your home.**
- **Don't leave the tap running. When shaving, brushing your teeth, washing your face, or food, turn off the tap.**
- **Only water your landscape when necessary and adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or street.**

As a reminder, under a Drought Response Level 1, general landscape watering may be done between 4pm and 10 am each day, and the following activities may be done at any time of day:

- **Irrigation of personal food gardens** may be done at any time of day;
- Irrigation of **new and replanted plant, seed, or turf** may be done at any time of day **for 30 days after installation**;
- **Drip irrigation or irrigation using soaker hoses** may be done at any time of day; and
- **Handwatering with a hose with automatic cutoff or handheld container** may be done at any time of day.

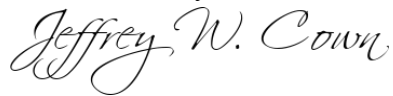
More water conservation information is available at <https://epd.georgia.gov/watershed-protection-branch/water-conservation>.

Within five days of receipt of this notice of a drought response level declaration, you shall implement this drought response strategy.

For more information, the Rules for Drought Management are available at <http://rules.sos.ga.gov/gac/391-3-30>. Also, a public report on current climatic and hydrologic indicators, prepared pursuant to the rule, is available at <https://epd.georgia.gov/watershed-protection-branch/drought-management>.

If you have any further questions, please contact Johmar Haye at [johmar.haye1@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:johmar.haye1@dnr.ga.gov), Wei Zeng at [wei.zeng@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:wei.zeng@dnr.ga.gov), or Jennifer Welte at [jennifer.welte@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:jennifer.welte@dnr.ga.gov). Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey W. Cown".

Jeffrey W. Cown  
Director  
Environmental Protection Division