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DEP Increases Drought Warning to Eight Counties, 26 Counties Remain on Drought Watch

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has placed four more counties on drought warning status following a meeting today of the Commonwealth Drought Task Force.

While recent precipitation over the past few weeks has helped dry conditions in the eastern part of Pennsylvania, the central part of the state still has persistent 90-day precipitation deficits of up to 4 inches from normal as well as low groundwater and stream levels.

Mifflin, Juniata, Snyder, and Union Counties were moved from drought watch to drought warning status. Snyder has a precipitation deficit of 11 inches from normal over the past year (<http://www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/NewsRoomPublic/Redirector.aspx?varURL=http://www.weather.gov/marfc/NorthPrecipitation365Day>).

These four counties join Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, and Northampton, which have been on drought warning status since November 3. DEP encourages residents in these counties to

voluntarily reduce their water use by 10–15 percent.

Counties on drought watch are Adams, Bedford, Berks, Bucks, Centre, Chester, Clinton, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Luzerne, Montgomery, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Pike, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Wayne, and York Counties. Residents are encouraged to reduce their nonessential water use by 5 percent.

Conditions in western Pennsylvania and along the northern tier generally have remained at normal or above normal levels.

Public water systems continue to implement voluntary and mandatory water reductions in response to reduced supplies.

DEP suggests several steps citizens can take to voluntarily reduce their water use:

- Run water only when necessary. Don't let the faucet run while brushing your teeth or shaving. Shorten the amount of time you let the water run to warm up before you shower. Use a bucket to catch the water and then reuse it to water your plants.
- Run the dishwasher and washing machine only with full loads.
- Check for household leaks. A leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water each day.
- Replace older appliances with high-efficiency, front-loading models that use about 30 percent less water and 40 to 50 percent less energy.
- Install low-flow plumbing fixtures and aerators on faucets.

DEP also offers other water conservation recommendations and water audit procedures for commercial and industrial users, such as food processors, hotels and educational institutions. These recommendations and additional drought monitoring information are available on the [DEP Drought Information website](http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PlanningConservation/Drought/Pages/default.aspx) (<http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PlanningConservation/Drought/Pages/default.aspx>).

Drought watch and warning declarations in late fall/early winter, while not common, have occurred several times in the past decade, in 2011, 2010, and 2008.

The Drought Task Force will meet next on January 5, 2017.

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