

Bryan W. Shaw, Ph.D., P.E., *Chairman*
Jon Niermann, *Commissioner*
Emily Lindley, *Commissioner*
Toby Baker, *Executive Director*



TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

August 22, 2018

Re: Drought Response for Public Water Systems

Dear Public Water System Official:

Despite recent rains, drought conditions persist across much of Texas. The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center seasonal drought outlook predicts that dry conditions will continue to persist in the coming months. With the high use months of summer ahead, we must take the necessary steps to prevent the loss of drinking water for basic health and safety services. Public water systems in portions of Texas may start to see a strain on their water supplies. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is encouraging public water systems to take reasonable measures to 1) increase conservation efforts and 2) identify and secure alternative water supplies to meet potable water needs. Conservation and alternative water supply measures include the following:

- Measure and track existing water supplies
- Implement your Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) at the appropriate stages to reduce consumption
- Report to TCEQ the amount of water supply if it is approaching less than 180 days
- Encourage water conservation
- Repair leaks in the distribution system to limit water loss
- Implement public education and outreach strategies
- Develop a plan to provide adequate and safe drinking water supplies
- Timely seek authorizations and funding resources to extend existing supply or obtain new sources
- Evaluate infrastructure and develop plans to meet needs (*e.g.* extending intake structures to deeper waters, drill new wells, etc.)

Your DCP is an important tool in conserving and managing your water supply during difficult times. We encourage you to review your DCP and prepare to implement water use restrictions as appropriate. If the water system you purchase water from has recently implemented restrictions, review your purchase contract and be prepared to implement restrictions, if necessary.

P.O. Box 13087 · Austin, Texas 78711-3087 · 512-239-1000 · www.tceq.texas.gov

How is our customer service? www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/customersurvey

printed on recycled paper

Public Water Systems are required to notify TCEQ when implementing mandatory provisions of their DCP. The TCEQ has developed an on-line form to facilitate reporting:

<http://www.DroughtReport.org>

This form should also be used for water supply shortage reporting. Please note that state law requires water utilities to determine available water supply and report to TCEQ when supply is less than 180 days. This assessment should be based on all current sources (*i.e.* surface water, groundwater, and purchased treated water through an interconnection). Additional drought information is available at <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/drought>

If you don't have reliable internet access, need help completing the form, or if you have questions, please call our Drought Team in the Water Supply Division at 512-239-4691. The collective cooperation of all public water systems is vital to ensuring public drinking water needs can be sustained during this persistent drought.

Where can you go for more assistance and information?

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has a free assistance program to help your water system address drought or other financial, managerial or technical issues.

For more information on getting some free assistance, the drought in Texas, and to report water use restrictions or concerns in your area, please contact the TCEQ'S drought-information hotline at 1-800-447-2827.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Toby Baker', written in a cursive style.

Toby Baker
Executive Director
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality