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TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Protecting Texas by Reducing and Preventing Pollution

May 27, 2022

Re: Drought Response for Public Water Systems

Dear Public Water System Official:

Severe drought conditions have returned to Texas, and forecasters are predicting that dry conditions may persist or worsen for the state. With the high use months of summer ahead, public water systems in Texas may start to see a strain on their water supplies. We must take the necessary steps to prevent the loss of drinking water for basic health and safety services. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is encouraging public water systems to take reasonable measures to increase conservation efforts and identify and secure alternative water supplies to meet potable water needs. Conservation and alternative water supply measures include the following:

- Implement your Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) at the appropriate stages to reduce consumption
- Encourage water conservation
- Implement public education and outreach strategies
- Measure and track existing water supplies
- Repair leaks in the distribution system to limit water loss
- Develop a plan to provide adequate and safe drinking water supplies
- Report to TCEQ the amount of water supply if it is approaching less than 180 days
- 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, drilling 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.

In accordance with TCEQ's rules in 30 Texas Administrative Code §288.20(b), you are required to notify the TCEQ of any changes to the implementation water use restrictions. TCEQ has developed an on-line form to facilitate a faster reporting of these changes. Information is collected and will be used to focus State resources and assistance:

https://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/homeland_security/security_pws

This form should also be used for water supply shortage reporting. Please note that state law also 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 Program Representative 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 about available free assistance, the drought in Texas, and how to report water use restrictions or concerns in your area, please contact the TCEQ'S drought-information hotline at 1-800-447-2827.

Sincerely,



Toby Baker
Executive Director
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality