



**FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

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# News Release

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## **Regional Drought Watch Declared by Council of Governments** *Frederick County residents are encouraged to conserve water supplies*

FREDERICK, Md. – Today the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) put into effect a drought watch for the region, including Frederick County. This precautionary measure comes as the region continues to experience unusually dry conditions that are expected to persist despite recent rainfall. Residents are urged to take voluntary measures to conserve water and reduce demand on the region's water supply systems.

This is the first drought watch issued in the region since 2010. A drought **watch** is the level in the [regional drought response plan](#) before drought **warning**, which is when water restrictions could become mandatory. While there is currently an adequate supply of water in the Potomac River and back-up reservoirs, implementing voluntary water conservation practices will help reduce water demand and environmental needs of the river.

“As officials continue to closely monitor drought conditions in the region, it is important for the public to use water wisely,” said Clark Mercer, COG executive director, adding that “with a few simple measures, we can all aid in water conservation efforts and help ensure an adequate water supply for our region.”

Residents and businesses are encouraged to use water wisely as part of their daily routines to optimize the use of water resources, especially if dry conditions persist. Residents who rely on wells without a backup water supply should take particular care to use water wisely.

Here are some simple tips residents can use to limit indoor and outdoor water use:

- Monitor watering lawns, plants and shrubs;
- Sweep sidewalks and driveways (instead of using a hose);
- Avoid washing your car, or instead use a commercial car wash that recycles water;
- Fix any plumbing leaks – especially toilets and faucets;
- Reduce shower length to under 5 minutes;
- Turn off water while brushing your teeth; and
- Wash fewer but fuller loads of dishes and clothes.

While the region is currently at a low to moderate risk for wildfires, fire safety and protection is a concern due to dry conditions. Residents should use extra caution when smoking outside, using outdoor grills or engaging in other activities that involve flammable materials.

The area is well prepared to withstand a drought thanks to three water supply reservoirs constructed in the 1980s to provide water during droughts. These reservoirs are currently full and will be utilized if needed.

“Due to years of planning and preparation, our water supply infrastructure is well-equipped to handle drought. Nevertheless, it makes sense for all of us to use water wisely and not waste this precious resource,” stated Michael Nardolilli, the executive director of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB).

Frederick County is not seeing any drought watch impacts on operations at this present time. Officials continue to closely monitor drought conditions in the region, including both the Potomac and groundwater levels. Water conservation is encouraged as a precautionary effort while the situation continues to be assessed. For additional water conservation tips, visit [COG’s Wise Water Use Campaign website](#).

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