

# **GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL WATER RATIONING PLAN**

## **September 25, 1995 edition**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Local Water Rationing Plan which is provided is a model or sample plan prepared by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Environmental Protection to serve as a basic document for public water supply agencies and/or municipalities to utilize to prepare a system/municipality specific Local Water Rationing Plan needed to deal with local water shortages caused by drought conditions. This model has been prepared recognizing the following factors:

(1)The Emergency Management Services Code (35 Pa. C.S. ?7101 et seq.) does not allow local governments to take actions, such as water rationing, to deal with natural resource shortages on their own. The Code provides for the Governor to declare such an emergency. (2)Water rationing is a severe action dictated at the local level due to seriously depleted water supplies that threaten public health and safety and the general welfare of the impacted community. (3)A public water supply agency or municipality, because of local conditions, may desire to deviate from certain provisions of the model plan and should have the capability and authority to do so. (4)A Local Water Rationing Plan should to the maximum extent possible be a stand-alone document, that for convenience of water users and other persons impacted by a plan, should not require crossreferencing or research of Commonwealth laws or regulations. (5)A political subdivision may enforce the provisions of its local water rationing plan by adopting an ordinance in accordance with the procedures specified in 4 Pa. Code Section 120.11.

#### **MODIFICATION BY LOCAL ORGANIZATION**

The Local Water Rationing Plan which follows can be modified by a public water supply agency or municipality without diverting from or conflicting with Commonwealth direction and the provisions of 4 Pa. Code Chapter 120 in the following areas:

(1)The establishment of an initial water reduction goal. An amount of 25 percent is suggested because of the severity of conditions required to implement rationing. (2)Modifications to listed non-essential use restrictions, provided that such modifications are no less stringent than municipal, county, regional, river basin or Commonwealth-wide restrictions that may be in effect. (3)Daily per capita water allotments may be changed based upon a system analysis to be consistent with the targeted reduction percentage. (4)The base period used to establish a reduction percentage may be a specific month, quarter or the most recent year. (5)Excess water use charges may be changed to be greater than the amounts indicated in the model plan. The maximum excess water use charge permitted will be as follows:

First 2,000 gallons or 5 times the actual rate portion thereof charged for water Each 1,000 gallons or 10 times the actual rate portion thereof thereafter charged for water

Purveyors desiring to implement rationing must specify the excess use charge to be utilized.  
SUGGESTED CONSERVATION MEASURES

Suggested water conservation measures for customers should be provided by the water purveyor and/or municipality by such methods as news releases, bulk mailings, billing inserts, etc. Suggested measures should include but not be limited to the following:

#### (1) Residential Water Customers

The purveyor will provide residential water customers with suggested means for reducing water consumption in order to achieve the established allotment. These suggestions may include:

(a) Locate and repair all leaks in faucets, toilets and water-using appliances. (b) Adjust all water-using appliances to use the minimum amount of water in order to achieve the appliance's purpose. (c) Use automatic washing machines and dishwashers only with full loads. Preferably, wash dishes by hand. (d) Take shorter showers and shallower baths. (e) Turn off shower while soaping; turn off faucet while brushing teeth, etc. (f) Install flow restrictors in showerheads and faucets. (g) Reduce the number of toilet flushes per day. Each flush uses about 5 gallons. Reduce water used per flush by installing toilet tank displacement inserts. (h) Use sink and tub stoppers to avoid wasting water. (i) Keep bottle of chilled drinking water in refrigerator. (j) Read the meter to determine the household's daily water use.

#### (2) Non-residential Water Customers

The water purveyor will provide each non-residential customer with suggested means to reduce usage levels. These suggestions may include: (a) Identify and repair all leaky fixtures and water-using equipment. Special attention is to be given to equipment connected directly to the water line, such as processing machines, steam- using machines, washing machines, water-cooled air conditioners and furnaces. (b) Assure that the valves and solenoids, which control water flows, are shut off completely when the water-using cycle is not engaged. (c) Adjust water-using equipment to use the minimum amount of water required to achieve its stated purpose. (d) Shorten rinse cycles for laundry machines as much as possible; lower water levels should be implemented wherever possible. (e) Temperature settings of hot water for showers should be set down at least 10 degrees to discourage lengthy shower taking. (f) Where plumbing fixtures can accommodate them, flow- restricting or other water-saving devices should be installed. (g) Review usage patterns to see where other savings can be made. (h) For processing and cooling and other uses where possible, either reuse water or use from sources that would not adversely affect public water supplies. (i) Advise employees, students, patients, customers and other users, not to flush toilets after every use. Install toilet tank displacement inserts; place flow restrictors in shower heads and faucets; close down automatic flushes overnight. (j) Adjust flushometers and automatic flushing valves to use as little water as possible or to cycle at greater intervals. (k) Encourage water-consciousness by placing water-saving posters and literature where employees, students, patients and customers, etc. will have access to them. (l) Customers should read water meters on a frequent basis to determine consumption patterns. (m) Reduce laundry usage or services by changing bed linen, etc., only where necessary to preserve the health of patients or residents. (n) Use disposable food service items.

#### (3) Hospitals and Health Care Facilities

The water purveyor will provide each hospital and health care facility with suggested means to reduce usage levels. These suggestions may include:

(a) Reduce laundry usage or services by changing bed linen, etc., only where necessary to preserve the health of patients or residents. (b) Use disposable food service items. (c) Eliminate, postpone or reduce, as may be appropriate elective surgical procedures during the period of the emergency.

Enclosures--1. Sample Letter for Submitting a Local Water Rationing Plan 2. Model Local Water Rationing Plan

#### ENCLOSURE 1

Sample Letter for Submitting a Water Rationing Plan to PEMA Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency

Room B-151 Transportation and Safety Building Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Gentlemen:

We hereby request Pennsylvania Emergency Management Council to consider and adopt the enclosed Water Rationing Plan for (municipalities in service area) the service area of \_\_\_\_\_ water company(s). We request this action because the water supply is presently 30%\* below normal and cannot be expected to provide adequate supply to cover existing demand. The drought and recent cold weather have created an emergency situation in that two of the usual water sources\* are no longer available. As a result, present storage would provide only 10 weeks of water\* at the present level of demand. This is inadequate to insure necessary water supply until anticipated spring recharge.

This plan was approved by the (local government or water purveyor)

Signatures (Appropriate local government officials, management representative of public supply water agency and County Commissions should sign, indicating coordination and concurrence with the need to ration water)

cc: Commonwealth Drought Coordinator

Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Water Supply and Community Health  
P.O. Box 8555 Harrisburg, PA 17105-8555

\*These are examples. Municipality or water purveyor should use system specific information to define the problem to be addressed by rationing.

#### ENCLOSURE 2

MODEL LOCAL WATER RATIONING PLAN Local Water Rationing Plan for the Service Area of Name(s) of purveyor or municipality

Authority

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Council is authorized to approve a Water Rationing Plan by virtue of Emergency Management Services Code 35 Pa. C.S. 7101 et seq. and 4 Pa. Code Chapter 120 as implemented by the Drought Emergency Proclamation dated.

#### Section 1. Definitions

(a) Commonwealth Drought Coordinator - an officer of the Department of Environmental Protection appointed by the Secretary to carry out the responsibilities established in the Pennsylvania Drought Contingency Plan to coordinate Commonwealth response action to a drought or water shortage emergency. (b) Emergency Service Area - the service areas of the water supply purveyors covered by this Local Water Rationing Plan, as set forth in Section 3, Scope. (c) Excess Use - the usage of water by a water customer in excess of the water allotment provided under the Local Water Rationing Plan for that customer, over any applicable period. (d) Non-Residential Customer - commercial, industrial, institutional, public

and all other users with the exception of hospitals and health care facilities. (e) Person - An individual, partnership, association company, corporation, municipality, municipal authority, political subdivision, or an agency of Federal or State government. The term includes the officers, employees and agents of a partnership, association, company, corporation, municipality, municipal authority, political subdivision, or an agency of Federal or State government.

NOTE: Blank spaces are to be filled in by water purveyor or municipality. Blank spaces and italicized sections are variable and will be specifically stated and indicated by the purveyor or municipality adopting a local water rationing plan and requesting Council approval.

(f) Purveyor, Public Water Supply Agency, Water Purveyor, Water Supply Purveyor - the owner or operator of any public water supply system including, but not limited to, any public utility, municipality, municipal authority, association or other organization which supplies water to the public; and the officers, employees and agents of any such purveyor.

(g) Residential Water Customer - any customer who receives water service for a single or multi-family dwelling unit. The term does not include educational or other institutions, hotels, motels, or similar commercial establishments. (h) Service Area - the geographic area serviced by an individual water supply purveyor. (i) Service Interruption - the temporary suspension of water supply, or reduction of pressures below that required for adequate supply, to any customer, portion of a water supply system, or an entire system. (j) Special Emergency Area - the area or areas within which the Governor has declared a state of drought and water shortage emergency. (k) Water Allotment - the maximum quantity of water allowed for each customer over any applicable period as established pursuant to Sections 8-10 of this Plan. (l) Water Customer - any person who is connected to and receives water service from a water supply system.

### Section 2. Purpose

This Local Water Rationing Plan is intended to establish measures for essential conservation of water resources, and to provide for equitable distribution of limited water supplies, in order to balance demand and limited available supplies and to assure that sufficient water is available to preserve public health and safety within the Emergency Service Area.

### Section 3. Scope

This Local Water Rationing Plan shall apply to all water uses within the service area of (Emergency Service Area) encompassing all or part of the following municipalities:

### Section 4. Objective of the Plan

(a) It is imperative that water customers within the Emergency Service Area achieve an immediate and further reduction in the water use in order to extend existing water supplies and, at the same time, assure that sufficient water is available to preserve the public health and sanitation, and provide fire protection service. (b) The objective of this Local Water Rationing Plan is to effect an immediate 25 percent reduction in water usage. Should drought conditions continue, further reductions in usage may be required. If it is necessary to implement further reductions, this Plan will be modified as noted in Section 16. It is the purveyor's responsibility to continually monitor on-hand quantities to determine if amendments are required. (c) The Plan provides for equitable reductions in water usage on the part of each water customer. The success of this Plan depends on the cooperation of all water customers in the emergency service area.

### Section 5. Measures to Implement the Water Rationing Plan

Each municipality and water supply purveyor within the Emergency Service Area will develop and adopt such implementing and enforcement measures as are necessary and appropriate to assure compliance with requirements of this Local Water Rationing Plan.

### Section 6. Prohibited Non-Essential Water Uses

(a) The following water uses are declared non-essential and are prohibited within the Emergency Service Area: (1) The watering of lawns. (2) The watering of outdoor gardens, landscaped areas, trees, shrubs, and other outdoor plants, except by means of a bucket, pail, or handheld hose equipped with an automatic shut-off nozzle between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. (3) The watering of golf course fairways. (4) The non-commercial washing of automobiles and trucks. (5) The washing of streets, driveways, and sidewalks. (6) The serving of water in restaurants, clubs or eating places unless specifically requested by the individual. (7) Ornamental water use including, but not limited to, fountains, artificial waterfalls, and reflecting pools. (8) The use of water for flushing sewers or hydrants by municipalities or any public or private individual or entity except as deemed necessary and approved in the interest of public health or safety by the municipal health officials. (9) The use of fire hydrants by fire companies for testing fire apparatus and for fire department drills except as deemed necessary in the interest of public safety and specifically approved by the municipal governing body. (10) The use of fire hydrants by municipal road departments, contractors and all others, except as necessary for fire fighting or protection purposes. (11) The use of water to fill and top off swimming pools. (b) Exemptions or Variance from Non-Essential Uses of Water Restrictions (1) If compliance with the non-essential use of water restrictions would result in extraordinary hardship upon a water user, the water user may apply for an exemption or variance. For purposes of this section, extraordinary hardship means a permanent damage to property or other personal or economic loss which is substantially more severe than the sacrifices borne by other water users subject to the nonessential use of water restrictions. (2) A person or business entity believing he suffers an extraordinary hardship and desiring to be wholly or partially exempt from the restrictions on the non-essential use of water shall submit a written request with full documentation supporting the need for the requested relief to the municipality, public water supply agency or water purveyor responsible for adopting and implementing this Plan. The application shall contain information specifying: (i) The nature of the hardship claimed and reason for the requested exemption or variance. (ii) The efforts taken by the applicant to conserve water and extent to which water use may be reduced by the applicant without extraordinary hardship. (3) The municipality, public water supply agency or purveyor shall advise the applicant of its decision regarding the application. An exemption or variance will be granted only to the extent necessary to relieve extraordinary hardship. (4) Any person aggrieved by a decision relating to such an exemption or variance rendered by a public utility or municipal corporation rendering water service beyond its corporate limits may file a complaint with the Public Utility Commission in accordance with the procedures established under the Public Utility Code. (5) Any person aggrieved by a decision relating to such an exemption or variance rendered by a water supply purveyor not under the jurisdiction of the Public Utility Commission may file an appeal with the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator who shall render a final decision.

### Section 7. General Requirement for Water Use Reductions

Each and every water customer, regardless of whether residential, commercial, industrial, municipal, institutional or other type of user, shall achieve the water use reductions set forth in this Local Water Rationing Plan. In order to achieve the overall objectives of the Plan, the water use restrictions and limitations set forth in Sections 8-10 shall apply.

## Section 8. Water Use Restrictions for Residential Users

(a) Metered Residential Water Customers and Allotments: (1) The number of permanent residents in each dwelling unit (household) will determine the amount of water that each household will be allowed. (2) Each dwelling unit (household) shall be allotted 40 gallons per day for each resident of the household. Households with only one permanent resident will have a daily allotment of 55 gallons. (3) Residential water customers are required to provide water purveyor personnel with reasonable access to read meters as necessary to implement this rationing plan. Where access is not readily available, the purveyor shall make all reasonable efforts to contact customers in order to arrange for access to read meters. In the event a water customer does not allow water purveyor personnel entry to read the meter, after the purveyor has made reasonable efforts to arrange for such access, the dwelling unit (household) allotment will be reduced to 55 gallons per day.

(b) Non-Metered Residential Water Customers and Allotments (1) In order to effectively implement and monitor the residential water conservation effort, a water allotment shall be established for the entire water system based on 40 gallons per day per capita served or 75 percent of the water used by the entire system during the same quarter of the preceding year, whichever is greater. (2) The purveyor will establish a communication system with the customers through public media to inform customers of the requirements of the Governor's Proclamation and this Local Water Rationing Plan; possible conservation measures that customers may employ; the system allotment; and a daily report of whether the usage was within the allotment. (c) Metered and Non-Metered Residential Customers of the Same Water Supply System Where a water supply system serves both metered and non-metered residential customers, the allotments and procedures provided under both subsections (a) and (b) shall be applied, as appropriate.

(d) Variances and Exceptions (1) Where the residential water allotment provided under this section would create extraordinary hardship, as in the case of special health-related requirements, the water customer may apply to the water supply purveyor for an exemption or variance from these requirements. If the purveyor finds that the allotment provided in this section would impose extraordinary hardship, the purveyor may establish a revised allotment for the particular customer. For these purposes, an "extraordinary hardship" means a permanent damage to property or economic loss which is substantially more severe than the sacrifices borne by other water users subject to this Water Rationing Plan. (2) Any person aggrieved by a decision relating to such an exemption or variance rendered by a public utility or municipal corporation rendering water service beyond its corporate limits may file a complaint with the Public Utility Commission in accordance with the procedures established under the Public Utility Code. (3) Any person aggrieved by a decision relating to such an exemption or variance rendered by a water supply purveyor not under the jurisdiction of the Public Utility Commission may file an appeal with the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator who shall render a final decision.

## Section 9. Water Use Restrictions for Non-Residential Water Customers

(a) Non-residential customers include commercial, industrial, institutional, public, and all other users, with the exception of hospitals and health care facilities. (b) Non-residential water customers shall reduce their water usage by a minimum of 25 percent of use levels for the same quarter of the preceding year. (c) It is the primary responsibility of each non-residential water customer to meet its mandated water use reduction goal in whatever manner possible. (d) The water supply purveyor will establish a water allotment for each non-residential water customer, based upon a required 25 percent reduction of water usage from the rate of water used by the customer in the same quarter of the preceding year or the last recorded use level if

no meter readings record the rate of the customer's use in the same quarter of the preceding year. (e) Each non-residential water user shall provide access to water supply purveyor personnel for purposes of meter reading and monitoring of compliance with this Plan. The water purveyor shall make all reasonable efforts to contact customers to arrange for access. (f) (i) If the mandated 25 percent reduction in water usage cannot be obtained without imposing extraordinary hardship threatening health and safety, the non-residential customer may apply to the water purveyor who provides the customers' service for a variance. For these purposes, "extraordinary hardship" means a permanent damage to property or economic loss which is substantially more severe than the sacrifices borne by other water users subject to this Water Rationing Plan. If the purveyor finds that the 25 percent reduction would cause extraordinary hardship or threaten health or safety, the purveyor may grant a variance and establish a revised water use reduction requirement for the particular customer. (ii) Any person aggrieved by a decision relating to such a variance rendered by a public utility or municipal corporation rendering water service beyond its corporate limits may file a complaint with the Public Utility Commission in accordance with the procedures established in the Public Utility Code. (iii) Any person aggrieved by a decision relating to such a variance rendered by a water supply purveyor not subject to the jurisdiction of the Public Utility Commission may appeal the decision to the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator who shall render a final decision.

#### Section 10. Water Use Restrictions for Hospitals and Health Care Facilities

(a) Hospitals and health care facilities shall comply with all restrictions imposed on residential and non-residential water customers as may be applicable to each individual institution, to the extent compliance will not endanger the health of the patients or residents of the institution. (b) Each hospital and health care facility shall survey its water usage patterns and requirements and implement such additional conservation measures as may be possible without endangering the health of patients or residents to achieve a 25 percent reduction in the institution's water usage.

#### Section 11. Enforcement of Water Rationing Plan

(a) The water supply purveyor will have lead responsibility for monitoring of compliance with this Water Rationing Plan. (b) Each water purveyor is authorized to alter meter reading schedules to assure adequate monitoring of compliance with this plan. (c) The purveyor shall institute procedures to closely monitor supplies and current usage to determine if reductions are being attained consistent with the target figures established in the plan. A purveyor shall establish a mechanism to advise the water users of the effects of rationing. (d) Proper law enforcement authorities and private citizens have additional enforcement responsibilities and rights as specified in Section 14 of this Local Water Rationing Plan.

#### Section 12. Service Interruptions

(a) Local Water Rationing Plans shall include provisions for implementation of temporary service interruptions if this action is necessary to achieve water use reductions to prevent a public water supply system from depleting its on hand water supply to the point that vital service demands including, but not limited to, public health and safety, firefighting, and use of health care facilities cannot be met. (b) The following provisions shall govern the implementation of temporary service interruptions: (1) In order to effectuate compliance with this Plan, the water supply purveyor is hereby authorized and required to plan and implement temporary service interruptions to all or part of its water supply system, as the water supply purveyor may deem appropriate, when any and/or all of the following conditions are determined by each water supply purveyor to exist, as to its water supply system: (i) A 25 percent reduction in systemwide water usage has not been achieved, and/or (ii) The 25 percent

reduction in systemwide water usage has been achieved, but has failed to have a significant impact in extending limited water supplies, and/or (iii) Temporary service interruptions are necessary in order to further extend limited and/or dwindling water supplies. (2) In the event that the water supply purveyor determines that temporary service interruptions are necessary, the water supply purveyor shall notify its customers through the public media (newspapers, radio, telephone, and television) serving the customers of the water supply purveyor in its service territory, at least one day prior to the temporary service interruptions, that a planned, temporary service interruption is to be imposed. In addition, the water supply purveyor shall notify the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator, the local coordinator of emergency management, local public health authorities, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, the Regional office of the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Bureau of Safety and Compliance, if the water supply purveyor is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission. Such notice shall: (i) State the day or days when the planned, temporary service interruptions will occur; (ii) State the time(s) when such planned, temporary service interruptions will commence, and the time(s) such interruptions will cease; (iii) State whether the planned, temporary service interruptions are to be imposed on the entire system, or a part thereof, and, if only part(s) of the system will experience planned, temporary service interruptions, identify the geographical boundaries within which the planned, temporary service interruptions will occur; and (iv) Advise all customers within the areas affected by planned, temporary service interruptions how to treat any water received from the system, for human consumption, during the period(s) of planned, temporary service interruptions and for such additional time as may be necessary until full pressure is restored to the system. (3) If the water supply purveyor imposes planned, temporary service interruptions as authorized and required by this Plan, it must provide for the continued delivery of water to health care facilities within the area(s) affected by such interruptions, by means of any adequate, alternative delivery measures that may be necessary. (4) If the water supply purveyor implements planned, temporary service interruptions, it must make provision, by any means possible, for the continued delivery of such water, as may be necessary, for the proper operation of sewage collection, treatment and disposal systems and facilities.

### Section 13. Excess Use Charges

Any residential or non-residential water customer who exceeds the allotments established pursuant to this Local Water Rationing Plan will be subject to the following excess-use charge provisions:

(a) Water supply purveyors in the Emergency Service Area are directed to collect an "excess-use charge" based on the amount by which a customer's use exceeds the water allotments established pursuant to the Local Water Rationing Plan, computed in accordance with the following schedule:

Excess Usage Per Month Charge for Excess First 2,000 gallons or \$7.00 per 1,000 gallons portion thereof  
 Each 1,000 gallons or \$15.00 per 1,000 gallons portion thereof thereafter or portion thereof

(b) Any monies collected by water supply purveyors through excess use charges shall not be accounted for as income to the purveyor, but shall be placed by the purveyor in a reserve account. The disposition of funds placed in the reserve account shall be governed as follows:

(1) Funds collected by a public utility or a municipal corporation rendering services beyond its corporate limits shall be disposed of as directed by orders and procedures adopted by the Public Utility Commission. (2) Funds collected by a municipal authority or a municipal corporation or other purveyor rendering services within its corporate limits shall be used to offset drought-related costs or expenses as directed by the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator. (c) In addition to the excess use charge, non-compliance with the Water Rationing



Plan will result in the following: (1) For the first excess use, a warning of possible discontinuation shall be issued to the customer by the water supply purveyor. (2) For the second or subsequent excess use, the water supplier may interrupt or shut off service to the customer for a period not to exceed 48 hours, or, if the customer provides access, the water supplier may install a flow restrictor in the customer's service line for the duration of the emergency. The cost incurred by the water purveyor to interrupt or shut off and reinstate service, or to install and remove a flow restrictor, shall be assessed to the water customer by the water purveyor. (3) Penalties as provided for in Section 14 of this plan. (d) Any customer or other person aggrieved by a decision or action by a water purveyor imposing an excess use charge or other remedy for non-compliance with the requirements of this Plan may proceed in accordance with the following provisions: (1) Each water purveyor shall adopt procedures which provide an opportunity for the customer or aggrieved party to rebut the finding of a violation, or evidence of circumstances beyond the customer's control which resulted in the violation. Each water purveyor shall keep a record of evidence presented regarding disputed violations, and shall provide the customer or aggrieved party with a written notice of the purveyor's final decision and action in such cases. (2) Any person aggrieved by the final decision or action of a public utility or municipal corporation rendering water service beyond its corporate limits may file a complaint with the Public Utility Commission in accordance with the procedures established under the Public Utilities Code, 66 PA C.S. ?101 et seq. (3) Any person aggrieved by the final decision or action of a water supply purveyor not subject to the Public Utility Commission may file an appeal with the Common Pleas Court in the county where the water service is provided, in accordance with the provisions and procedures of the Local Agency Law, 2 Pa. C.S. 551- 555, 751-754.

#### Section 14. Penalties

Any person who violates the provisions of this Plan, who fails to carry out duties and responsibilities imposed by this Plan, or who impedes or interferes with any action undertaken or ordered pursuant to this Plan, shall be subject to the penalties provided by law under 35 Pa. C.S. 7707. Violation of any provision of this Chapter is a summary offense enforceable by law enforcement officers or private citizens in accordance with 234 Pa. Code Chapter 50 (relating to summary cases) and Chapter 6000 (relating to Rules of Criminal Procedure for the Municipal Court of Philadelphia).

#### Section 15. Savings Clause

Nothing in this Local Water Rationing Plan shall in any way limit or affect the power or authority of any political subdivision to adopt and enforce ordinances, rules, restrictions and orders for water conservation and protection of essential water supplies, provided that such ordinances, rules and restrictions are not inconsistent with the requirements of this Plan.

#### Section 16. Amendment of the Plan

Any water purveyor, county or municipality covered under the provisions of this Plan may, at any time, submit proposed additions to or amendments of this Plan to the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator.

#### Section 17. Effective Period

This Plan shall remain in effect until terminated by action of the Governor, or by order of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Council.

#### Section 18. Effective Date

This Plan shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the Pennsylvania Emergency

Management Council.

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## DROUGHT TERMINOLOGY

**DROUGHT DETERMINATIONS:** The Commonwealth uses five parameters to assess drought conditions. These include streamflows (compared to the same time for the period of record); precipitation (departure from normal, 30 year average precipitation); reservoir storage levels in a variety of locations (especially three New York City reservoirs in upper Delaware River Basin); groundwater elevations in a number of counties (comparing to past month, past year and historic record); and Palmer Drought Index, a measure of soil moisture computed by the National Weather Service. Phases of drought preparedness in Pennsylvania are:

**DROUGHT WATCH:** A period to alert government agencies, public water suppliers, water users and the public regarding the onset of conditions indicating the potential for future drought-related problems. The focus during this stage is on increased monitoring, awareness and preparation for response if conditions worsen. A request for voluntary water conservation is made. The objective of voluntary water conservation measures during a drought watch is to reduce water uses by 5% in the affected areas. Because of varying conditions, individual water suppliers or municipalities may be asking for more stringent conservation actions.

**DROUGHT WARNING:** This phase prepares for coordinated response to imminent drought conditions and potential water supply shortages and initiates concerted voluntary conservation measures to avoid or reduce shortages, relieve stressed sources, develop new sources, and if possible forestall the need to impose mandatory water use restrictions. The objective of voluntary water conservation measures during a drought warning is to reduce overall water uses by 10-15% in the affected areas. Because of varying conditions, individual water suppliers or municipalities may be asking for more stringent conservation actions.

**DROUGHT EMERGENCY:** This stage is a concentrated management phase of operations to marshal all available resources to respond to actual emergency conditions, to avoid depletion of water sources, to assure at least minimum water supplies to protect public health and safety, to support essential and high priority water uses and to avoid unnecessary economic dislocations. It is possible during this phase to impose mandatory restrictions on nonessential water uses that are provided for in 4 PA Code Chapter 119, if deemed necessary and if ordered by the Governor of Pennsylvania. The objective of water use restrictions (mandatory or voluntary) and other conservation measures during this phase is to reduce consumptive water use in the affected area by 15%, and to reduce total use to the extent necessary to preserve public water system supplies, to avoid or mitigate local or area shortages, and to assure equitable sharing of limited supplies.

**LOCAL WATER RATIONING:** Although not a drought phase, local municipalities may, with the approval of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Council, implement local water rationing to share a rapidly dwindling or severely depleted water supply in designated water supply service areas. These individual water rationing plans, authorized through provisions of 4 PA Code Chapter 120, will require specific limits on individual water consumption to achieve significant reductions in use.

Under both mandatory restrictions imposed by the Commonwealth and local water rationing, procedures are provided for granting of variances to consider individual hardships and economic dislocations.

**Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**



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