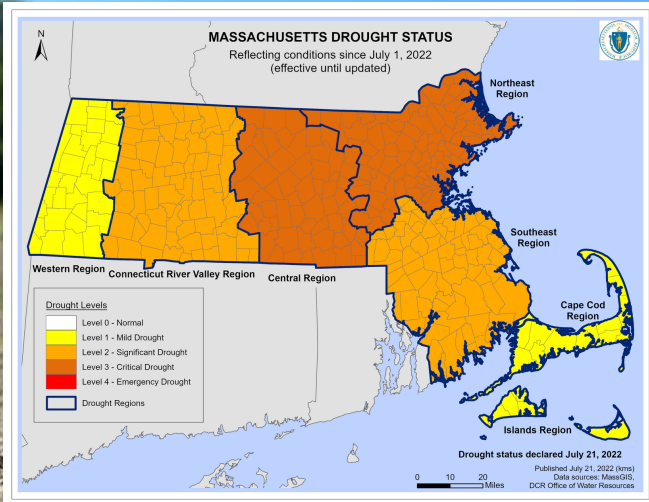


100% of Massachusetts is in drought this July.

It's the perfect time to pass the drought bill: S.530, for more resilient drought management.



Currently, each town decides their own water conservation measures during drought. **Some municipalities impose stringent measures, while others do nothing at all, while both withdraw water from the same struggling basin.**

S.530 would change that by giving EEA the authority to require regional water conservation measures during a declared drought, affecting only nonessential outdoor watering, **as recommended in the state's 2019 Drought Management Plan.** Water use for agriculture or business would be exempt.

This would make watering rules consistent across neighboring municipalities, making rules easier to understand for the public, while **providing actual relief for our rivers, wildlife, and water supplies.**

**For more information, contact
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How Drought Impacts Massachusetts:

- Droughts make it harder for crops to grow, impacting our local agriculture. In 2016, MA farmers suffered **\$18 million** due to drought-related crop losses.
- Cranberry bogs, an iconic Massachusetts crop, are especially at risk of failure during drought.
- River herring, or alewives, that traditionally thrive in our streams struggle in low flows, sometimes resulting in fish kills.
- In 2016, five municipalities declared **water supply emergencies**.
- In October 2020 alone, rivers experienced **record low flows**, like the Three mile River in Dighton with a 54-year low, or the North Nashua River in Leominster with an 85-year low, which contributed to losses in tourism, recreation, and property value.

Our current approach to drought management is a confusing patchwork of conservation measures that have limited impact.

Currently, the state does not have the authority to require water conservation during a drought until the Governor declares a drought emergency. Climate change will only increase the frequency and severity of droughts - our state needs to have a better, coordinated response.

With S.530, the state can be proactive in saving water during a drought, rather than waiting until an emergency hits.