



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE

July 14, 2021

Laura Watson
Director
Washington State Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Director Watson:

Based on the July 8, 2021, recommendation from the Executive Water Emergency Committee, I affirm that the state of Washington is suffering from regional drought conditions.

Averaged statewide, Washington experienced its second driest March through June on record, with June ranking as the second warmest since 1895. Over the past 90 days, nearly the entire state has received less than 75 percent of normal precipitation. A record-setting heat wave in late June purged remaining snowpack. Stream flows, ground water levels, and soil moisture around the state are much below normal, with forecasts indicating a low likelihood of conditions improving over the remaining summer.

These conditions have caused undue hardship for water users, including small community water systems and farmers. I am concerned about fish and the harm that could result from reduced stream flows. Also, severe drought increases the risk of large wildfires.

Therefore, I hereby authorize you, as Director of the Department of Ecology, to take action, including issuing any necessary orders, to formally declare a drought emergency in the following water resource inventory areas: Chelan, Colville, Deschutes, Entiat, Hangman, Kettle, Lewis, Little Spokane, Lower Skagit-Samish, Lower Spokane, Methow, Middle Spokane, Nooksack, Okanogan, Palouse, Skokomish-Dosewallips, Snake River, Soleduc, Stillaguamish, Upper Chehalis, Upper Yakima, Walla Walla, and Willapa.

I also hereby ask that the Department of Ecology confer with the Office of Financial Management to identify and make available any suitable funding within existing appropriations for drought emergency assistance.

Together, I want us to ensure that Washingtonians have the information and assistance they need to get through this drought in the best shape possible. Throughout the upcoming duration of drought conditions, I request that the Department of Ecology and other agencies keep me informed about drought and its effects on Washingtonians.

Very truly yours,

Jay Inslee
Governor