



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Water Shortage Response Plans Meet State Standards

RALEIGH – State environmental officials have approved the recently revised water shortage response plans for five community water systems.

The plans provide specific guidance for how each community water system will reduce water use during times of drought or other water shortage emergencies.

In March, the state Division of Water Resources asked community water systems in several western North Carolina counties facing severe drought to revise their water shortage response plans to meet new state standards. Black Mountain, Brevard, Hendersonville, Polk County and Woodfin Sanitary District resubmitted plans that meet the requirements of the law and therefore were approved.

The state's action came as a result of a 2008 law aimed at improving water reduction measures during periods of water shortage.

“We appreciate the water systems’ quick revisions and resubmission of their water shortage response plans,” said Linwood Peele, chief of the division’s Water Supply Planning Section. “We look forward to working with all communities in their efforts to supply their customers with safe and dependable sources of drinking water.”

The water shortage response plans from Black Mountain, Brevard, Hendersonville, Polk County and Woodfin Sanitary District were among the first to be reviewed using the state’s new criteria.

Staff members with the state Division of Water Resources have identified several common procedural problems in plans submitted by municipal water systems statewide. Some plans lack language requiring mandatory implementation of plan provisions whenever an extreme drought or other water emergency occurs. For instance, conditional language such as “may” must be changed to “shall” or “will.” Other plans do not provide specific, measurable triggers telling when the system must enter or exit different stages of drought response.

The N.C. League of Municipalities and the state Division of Water Resources are working with municipal water systems to ensure that each water system understands the new water shortage response plan requirements. As such, officials with the state and the League of Municipalities had a conference call, will have webinars and a workshop to help municipalities develop water shortage response plans that meet the minimum requirements of the law and minimize the impacts of future droughts and other water emergencies on communities statewide.

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