

**EXECUTIVE ORDER  
2021-07**

Declaring a State of Emergency Due to Drought Conditions

**WHEREAS**, the state of Utah experienced a record dry and near record hot calendar year in 2020;

**WHEREAS**, the statewide current snowpack is approximately 70% of normal April peak;

**WHEREAS**, current soil moisture is exceptionally low and at levels not previously seen since soil moisture monitoring began in 2006;

**WHEREAS**, low soil moisture will adversely affect the spring runoff;

**WHEREAS**, the state's reservoir storage has decreased 14% over the past year;

**WHEREAS**, all forecasts for spring runoff for the state are below 72% of the state seasonal average;

**WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Agriculture currently has listed 28 primary and one contiguous county in Utah under the Secretarial Disaster Designation for drought;

**WHEREAS**, these extreme drought conditions have adversely and significantly impacted agribusiness and livestock production, as well as wildlife and natural habitats;

**WHEREAS**, increased recreation in dry vegetative conditions has contributed to an increased and prolonged threat of wildfire across the state;

**WHEREAS**, drought conditions that require mitigation are expected to persist;

**WHEREAS**, these conditions create a state of emergency within the intent of the Disaster Response and Recovery Act found in Title 53, Chapter 2a of the Utah Code;

**WHEREAS**, Utah Code § 53-2a-204(1)(a) authorizes the governor to utilize all available resources of state government as reasonably necessary to cope with a state of emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, Utah Code § 53-2a-204(1)(b) authorizes the governor to employ measures and give direction to state and local officers and agencies that are reasonable and necessary for the purpose of securing compliance with orders made pursuant to the Disaster Response and Recovery Act;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Spencer J. Cox, Governor of the State of Utah, declare a state of emergency due to the aforesaid circumstances requiring aid, assistance, and relief available from State resources and hereby order:

1. The state Emergency Operations Plan is activated.
2. The state Drought Response Plan is activated.
3. The state Drought Response Committee is activated and shall:
  - a. review hardships and unmet needs caused by the drought;
  - b. identify and recommend action to meet those needs;
  - c. ensure inter-agency coordination in addressing those needs; and
  - d. recommend when deactivation of the state Drought Response should occur.

I further make the following recommendations:

1. Water suppliers and irrigation companies should:
  - a. where possible, delay the start of the irrigation season or end irrigation early;
  - b. encourage efficient landscape watering; and
  - c. as needed, contact the Division of Water Resources for assistance with developing a drought response plan.
2. Cities and counties should consider developing and implementing water restriction plans for the upcoming irrigation season.
3. Residents should:
  - a. reduce indoor water waste;
  - b. fix irrigation inefficiencies;
  - c. convert unnecessary turf areas to waterwise landscapes;
  - d. consider purchasing a smart-timer controller or low flow toilet (rebates are offered at [utahwatersavers.com](http://utahwatersavers.com));
  - e. reduce indoor water use by taking shorter showers, turning off water when not in use, and replacing appliances with water-efficient models where practical.

This Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for 30 days unless the Legislature extends the state of emergency.

**IN WITNESS, WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Utah. Done in Salt Lake City, Utah, on this, the 17th day of March, 2021.

(State Seal)

**Spencer J. Cox**  
Governor

ATTEST:

**Deidre M. Henderson**  
Lieutenant Governor

2021/07/EO