

# Water Supply Status Update

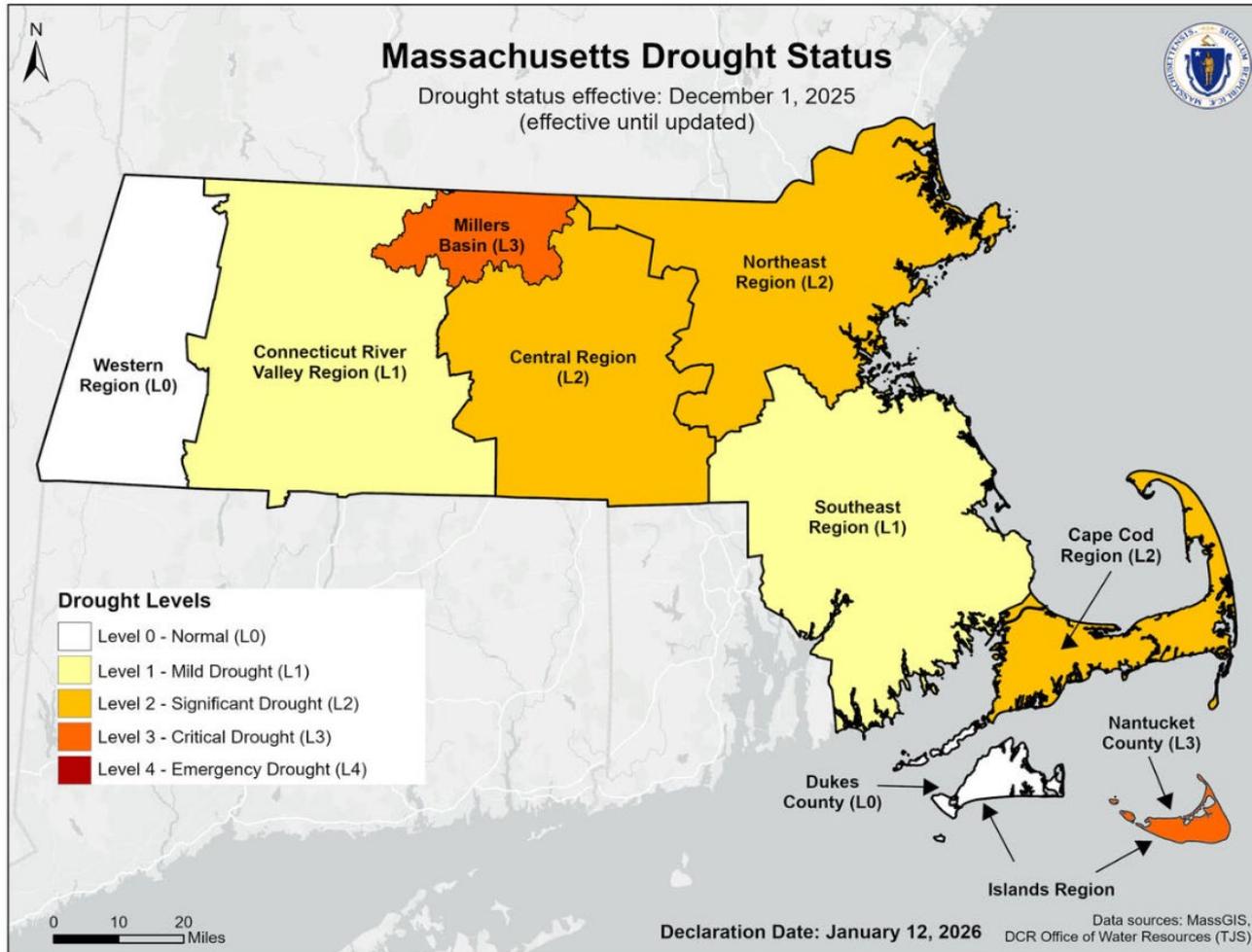
City Council Meeting

January 27, 2026

# Background

- Lack of precipitation continues
  - 2025 – 37.6 inches vs avg of 48.2 inches
- Twofold
  - Lower reservoir levels
  - Delayed seasonal recovery/recharge
- Statewide drought – Northeast Mass. - Level 2 Significant Drought
- Haverhill declared a Drought Emergency on December 18, 2025, in accordance with its Drought Management Plan (Chapter 250)

# Massachusetts Drought Status



January 2026

# Drought Management Plan (Chapter 250, Article VI)

- Adopted in 2016 and required by MassDEP
- Defines required water conservation actions based on reservoir levels
  - Watch (voluntary)
  - Warning (voluntary)
  - Emergency (mandatory)
  - Critical (mandatory plus)

Emergency Drought declared December 18<sup>th</sup>

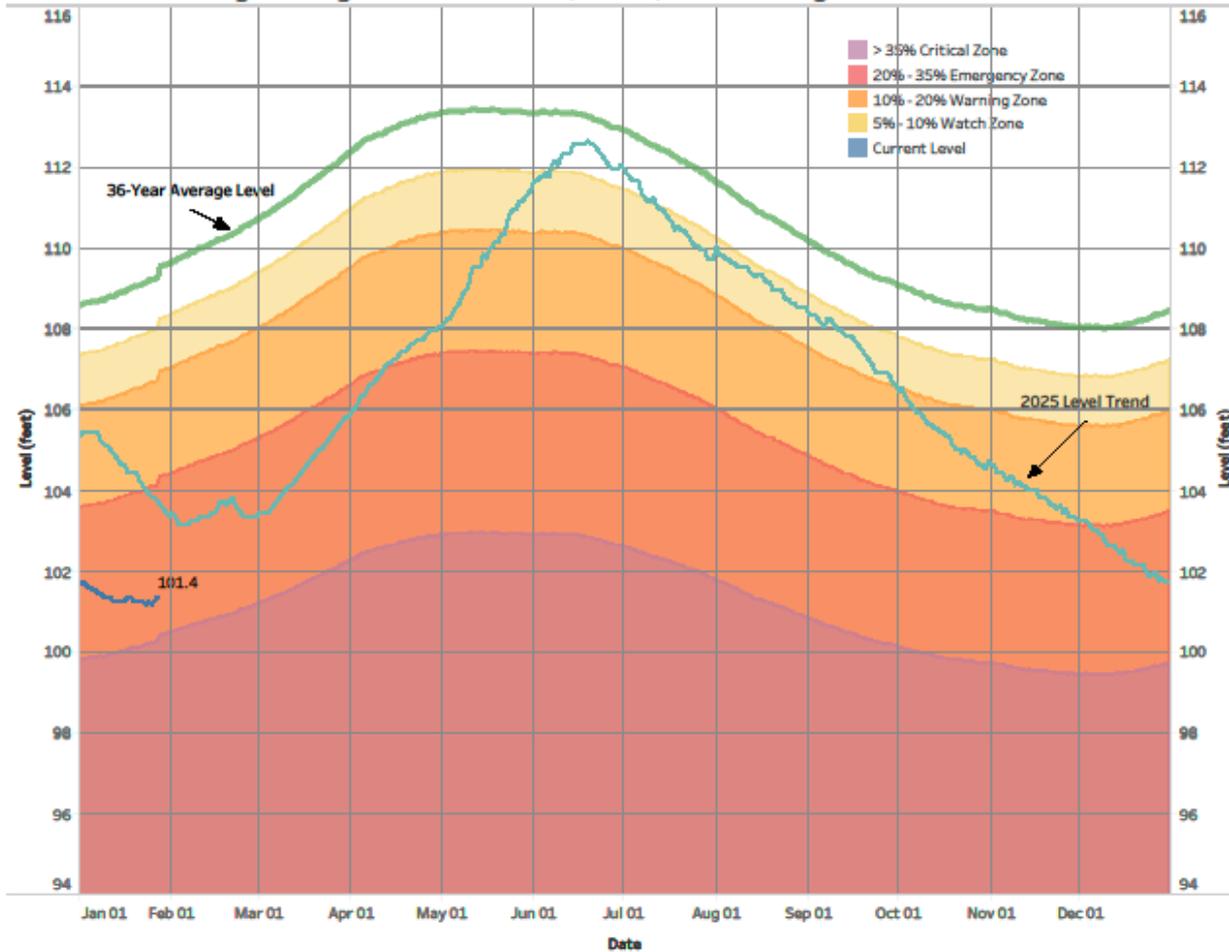
# Ongoing Drought

November 2024	Drought Watch
March 18, 2025	Declared Emergency Drought
May 14, 2025	Declared end of Drought Emergency
September 16, 2025	Drought Watch status
December 18, 2025	Declared Drought Emergency

# Current Reservoir Conditions

- Kenoza Lake
  - Current level – 101.4 feet
  - Full level – 114.5 feet
- Millvale Reservoir
  - Current level – 40.1 feet
  - Full level – 44.7 feet
  - Estimated days of pumping at 2 million gallons per day – 13 days
  - Status - Online – limited pumping
- Crystal Lake
  - Current level – 148.0 feet
  - Full level – 151.1 feet
  - Offline – not available at this time

## Kenoza Lake Drought Stages with Current, 2024, and Average Levels

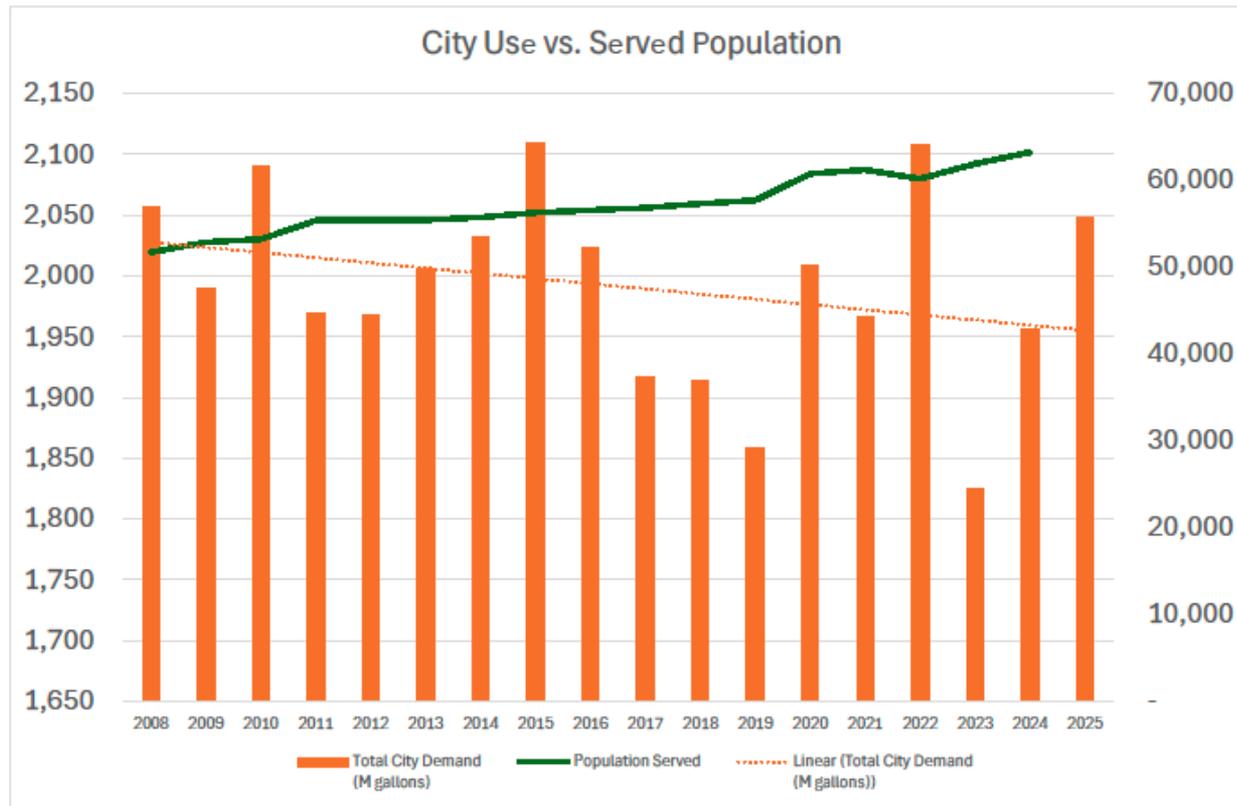


**Current lake level is 8 feet below average**

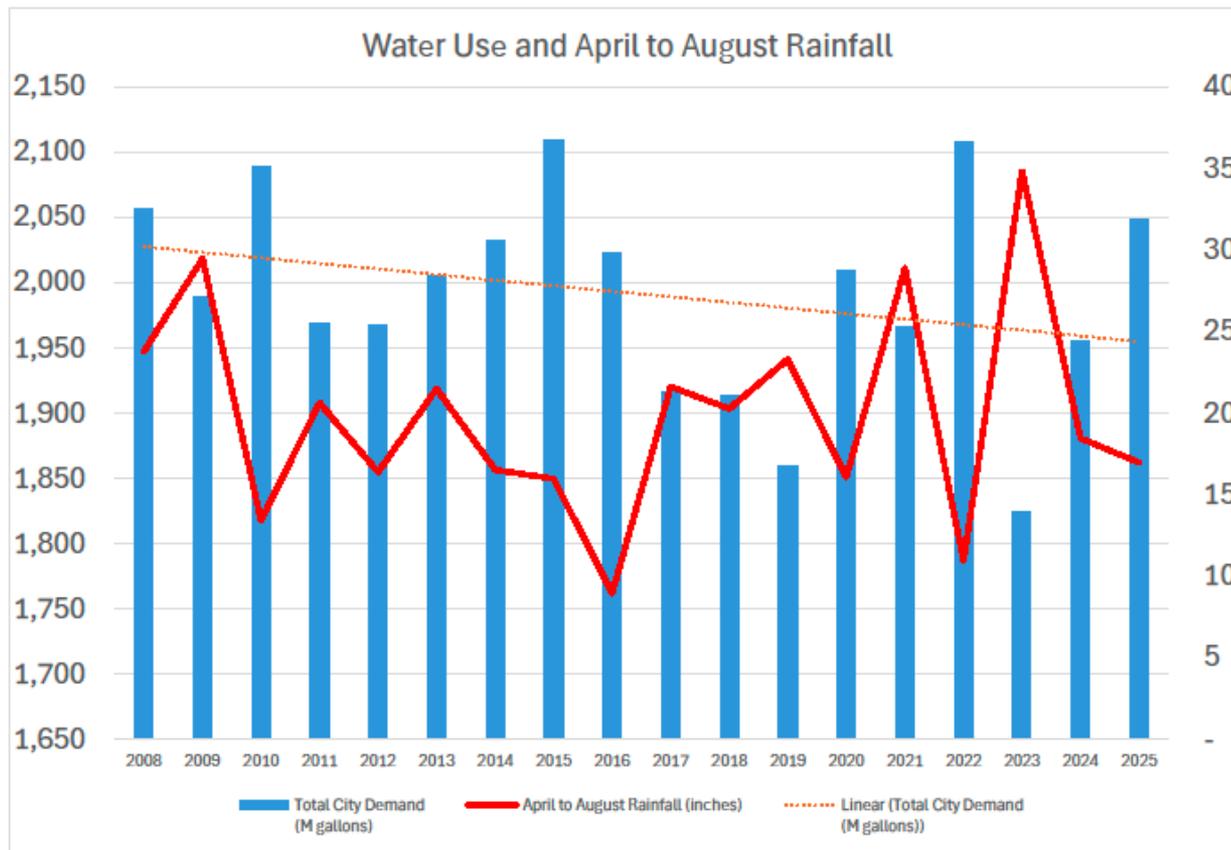
# What are we doing?

- Declared Drought Emergency under Chapter 250
- Public notification (website, Everbridge, bill messaging, direct notices)
- Outreach to large commercial/industrial water users to reduce non-essential demand
- Monitoring meter data for abnormal usage and potential leaks
- Enforcement and response to violations and complaints
- Considering more stringent water use restrictions
- Additional water supply measures under consideration, based on conditions

# Water Usage and Population



# Rainfall and Water Usage



# Drought Emergency Declaration

- Effective December 18, 2025
- Nonessential outdoor water use is prohibited at all times
- Exceptions per Chapter 250
- Uses subject to review and approval

Monitor reservoir levels and make adjustments

It all depends on the weather!

# Exceptions per Chapter 250

- Agriculture
- Uses for the core functions of a business
  - Golf courses - tees and greens, and limited fairway watering
  - Plant nurseries or agricultural operations
  - Wash equipment to prevent damage and/or maintain performance
  - Pest management
  - Plant cooling
- Irrigation with harvested and stored stormwater runoff

# First Tier – Allowable Uses

(Permitted only before 7:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m.)

- Watering of edible plants and vegetable gardens using a watering can, hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle, or drip irrigation system.
- Watering of newly planted trees, shrubs, or perennial plants using a watering can or hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle.
- Watering of trees using tree watering bags (filling bags with a hose is permitted).

# Second Tier – Allowable Uses

## Effective Date TBD

- Watering of newly seeded or sodded lawns during the initial 30-day establishment period.
- Irrigation of public parks and recreation fields by automatic sprinkler systems.

*Permitted only before 7:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m.*

# Prohibited Outdoor Water Use

- Irrigation of lawns, except for newly seeded or sodded lawns during the 30-day establishment period.
- Washing of vehicles, except at commercial car washes.
- Washing of sidewalks, driveways, patios, decks, or other paved surfaces.
- Operation of decorative fountains, water features, or ponds without aquatic life.
- Filling or topping off of swimming pools, hot tubs, or wading pools.
- Use of outdoor misting systems.
- Irrigation of ornamental plants, flowers, or non-edible gardens that are not newly planted.
- Lawn or landscape irrigation by automatic sprinkler systems, except for public parks and recreation fields.
- Non-essential water use for dust control, construction site cleaning, or similar activities.

# Please conserve water indoors

- Check for toilet and faucet leaks and fix them immediately
- Run dishwashers and washing machines only on a full load
- Shorter showers or utilize the flow control feature built into many newer showerheads
- Use a commercial car wash where water is typically recycled
- Water Billing Office has water-saving faucet and showerhead fixtures
- Run water only when necessary (lathering hands, shaving, etc.)

Questions?