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Severe drought conditions persist

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YORK - The York Water District announced the short-term rainfall deficits have continued through the last five months in Southern Maine resulting in severe drought conditions for the entire state including Chase's Pond in York.

The water supply condition in Chase's Pond due to very low precipitation has been worsened by unusually high customer water demands during the coronavirus pandemic. Since the pandemic started, the York Water District has seen a 13% increase in overall water use. The pond level continues to be nearly one and one-half feet below its average seasonal level. The precipitation forecast for the next three months from the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center predicted the higher likelihood of normal to above normal precipitation, but the area has seen very little rain to adequately halt this downward trend.

The Water District is calling for increased voluntary water conservation on non-essential water use.

These voluntary measures can be an effective means of addressing water quantity deficits until natural recharge occurs. The Water District would also like to make customers aware that it will be pursuing options to ensure continued ample water service through conservation, local partnerships, and interconnections.

The below list of conservation measures from the Maine Drinking Water Program has been enhanced to offer more options for voluntary water conservation measures that the Water District asks you to follow:

Outside water use:

Avoid watering lawns. Aerate lawns to allow less water use to reach the roots.

Water garden plants only when necessary, either early in the day (before 9 a.m.) or late in the evening (after 5 p.m.) to avoid water loss by evaporation. Use a soil trickle hose not sprinkler.

Keep grass longer than usual to promote soil moisture retention and help develop deeper roots. Use mulch and dig troughs around plants to hold moisture.

Use containers under downspouts to catch and use rainfall.

Avoid washing cars and other vehicles.

Use a broom instead of using water to clean walkways, decks or driveways.

Cover swimming pools when they are not in use to prevent evaporation.

Consider delaying planting, seeding and sodding.

Inside water use:

Wash only full loads of laundry and dishes. Wash dishes by hand.

Reduce the number of toilet flushes per day.

Adapt plumbing with water-saving devices. These are inexpensive and easy to install.

Keep a bottle of chilled water in the refrigerator for drinking.

Take shorter showers (approximately 5 minutes or less); avoid baths.

Turn off water while brushing your teeth or shaving.

Collect and reuse clean household water (water from cooking can be used to water plants).

Fix any leaks you may find around the house, including leaky toilets, which can use up to 200 gallons of water per day.