



# DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Chris Christie, Governor  
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor  
Bob Martin, Commissioner



## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[www.nj.gov/dep](http://www.nj.gov/dep)

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### COMMISSIONER MARTIN LIFTS DROUGHT WARNING AND WATCH ADVISORIES FOR MOST OF NEW JERSEY

*HUNTERDON AND SOMERSET COUNTIES REMAIN UNDER DROUGHT WARNING;  
WISE WATER USE ENCOURAGED AS LAWN AND GARDENING SEASON BEGINS*

**(17/P32) TRENTON** – Following months of sufficient precipitation, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin today lifted a drought warning for 12 of 14 counties in the northern, central and northern coastal regions of New Jersey and removed a drought watch for four counties in the southwestern part of the state.



Commissioner Martin signed an Administrative Order removing, Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Sussex, Union and Warren counties from drought warning status and removing Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Salem counties from drought watch. These advisories had been in place since October.

Round Valley and Spruce Run reservoirs in central New Jersey both remain below normal capacity. Round Valley is at about 72 percent capacity and Spruce Run is at about 69 capacity, due in large part to less precipitation in this area over the winter.

As a result, Hunterdon County and Somerset County, which are primarily served by these reservoirs, will remain under a drought warning. This allows for continued modified passing flows designed to conserve storage.

“The return of soaking and well-timed precipitation over the winter and early spring has resulted in steady improvements in our drought indicators for most of the state,” Commissioner Martin said. “In particular, storage levels in the major reservoir systems that serve the densely populated portions of northern New Jersey are at full capacity entering the time of year when water demand peaks.”

“Water levels are increasing across the state in response to recent rains,” said State Geologist Jeffrey L. Hoffman. “Reservoirs, with the exception of Round Valley and Spruce Run, are more than 90 percent full. Stream flows and groundwater levels are trending upward, which is a good sign. We will continue to closely monitor indicators in all parts of the state.”

The Round Valley and Spruce Run reservoirs, operated by the New Jersey Water Supply Authority, is typically at 94 percent this time of year.

“By maintaining the reduced passing flow requirement, the authority would expect to save anywhere between seven to ten billion gallons in the reservoirs over the upcoming summer months, which will allow the reservoirs to continue to improve,” said Beth Gates, executive director for the authority.

While most regions of the state are now under normal water supply conditions, Commissioner Martin reminds the public to always practice water conservation, especially when watering lawns and landscaping, which accounts for a significant portion of water use in the spring and summer.

“I want to thank water suppliers and residents in the affected areas of the state for working with us to conserve water,” Commissioner Martin said. “I urge everyone to always be mindful of not wasting water. We should not forget the images from last fall of the muddy slopes of receding reservoirs as we turn our attention to maintaining our lawns and landscaping this spring.”

Some suggested lawn and garden water conservation tips include:

- Do not over-water lawns and landscaping. Two times per week for 30 minutes in the morning or late afternoon during drier periods is typically sufficient.
- Use a hose with a hand-nozzle to water flowers and shrubs.
- Do not mow your grass too short. Set mowing height to at least three inches. Longer grass blades help retain soil moisture, improve root growth and encourage a healthier lawn.
- Avoid watering lawns and plants during the heat of the day, since much of this water will evaporate without helping your lawn.
- Reduce the size of your lawn by establishing gardens that use native, drought-tolerant vegetation.
- Apply mulch around shrubs and flower beds to reduce evaporation, promote plant growth and reduce weeds.
- Use barrels or other containers to capture rainfall for use in watering. Cover the openings with fine screens to prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs in the collected water.
- Use a broom to sweep sidewalks and driveways rather than a hose.

To save water in the home:

- Fix leaky faucets and pipes.
- Turn off the faucet while shaving and brushing teeth.
- Install faucet aerators.
- Run washing machines and dishwashers when full, or make sure to select the appropriate wash cycle for the load size.
- Take shorter showers.

- Install a low-flow toilet.

For more state water supply status information, visit: [www.njdrought.org](http://www.njdrought.org)

To view Commissioner Martin's Administrative Order, visit:

<http://www.nj.gov/dep/drought/docs/ao2017-05.pdf>

For more tips and information on the importance of water conservation, click on the logo above or visit: [www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/conserves.htm](http://www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/conserves.htm)

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