

**NEWS RELEASE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GOV. RIDGE LIFTS DROUGHT EMERGENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR 54 COUNTIES**

*Ends ban on water use everywhere except Somerset County*

**Governor continues to ask Pennsylvanians to conserve,  
help prevent future drought emergencies**

**Renews call on Congress for farm aid:**

**‘While the drought is over, the damage isn’t’**

**HARRISBURG (Sept 30)** – Gov. Tom Ridge today lifted the drought emergency water-use restrictions for 54 counties imposed on July 20.

"This summer, we faced a very serious drought across Pennsylvania," Gov. Ridge said. "It was essential in July to conserve water immediately. We asked Pennsylvanians to conserve water – and they did! Water consumption was cut by as much as 35 percent in some areas. Pennsylvanians’ work to conserve our water – and the rains Hurricane Floyd and other storms brought to Pennsylvania – helped get us through the drought.

"We don’t want to impose these restrictions one day longer than we must. So today, I’m pleased to announce that I am lifting these water restrictions for 54 counties."

Somerset County remains in drought-emergency status. There are three community water systems in the county that have not yet recovered and need to continue their rationing plans.

On July 20, Gov. Ridge declared a drought emergency in 55 counties. Gov. Ridge amended the declaration on Sept. 10 to include all 67 counties – to make farmers statewide eligible for the more than \$5 million in interim state assistance provided pending grants from the federal government. The agricultural drought emergency stays in place statewide for any area where farmers have significant crop damage.

"While the drought is over, the damage isn’t," Gov. Ridge said. "And we can’t forget those who were so badly hurt by it. Our farmers have lost at least \$700 million because of this drought, and we must all join together to urge Congress to do the right thing and send grants to help them recover."

Examples of the restrictions imposed last July are bans on: washing cars with a hose; watering lawns; watering outdoor gardens and landscaped areas; washing paved surfaces; filling fountains; topping off pools; and serving water in restaurants unless requested.

After the Governor signed the proclamation today, he directed Department of Environmental Protection Secretary James M. Seif to move 27 counties into a drought warning and 39 counties into a watch.

A drought watch is the first and least severe of the three drought declarations under the state's drought-operating plan.

It calls for a voluntary 5 percent reduction of nonessential water use. A drought warning, the second stage of the three drought declarations, calls for a 10 percent voluntary reduction in water consumption. A drought emergency, the third and most severe stage, imposes mandatory restrictions on water use.

Following is a listing of the current drought status for all Pennsylvania counties:

**Drought Emergency (1)**

Somerset

**Drought Warning (27)**

Allegheny	Clearfield	Jefferson
Armstrong	Clinton	Lawrence
Beaver	Crawford	McKean
Bedford	Elk	Mercer
Butler	Erie	Potter
Cambria	Fayette	Venango
Cameron	Forest	Warren
Centre	Greene	Washington
Clarion	Indiana	Westmoreland

**Drought Watch (39)**

Adams	Huntingdon	Northumberland
Berks	Juniata	Perry
Blair	Lackawana	Philadelphia
Bradford	Lancaster	Pike
Bucks	Lebanon	Schuylkill
Carbon	Lehigh	Snyder
Chester	Luzerne	Sullivan
Columbia	Lycoming	Susquehanna
Cumberland	Mifflin	Tioga
Dauphin	Monroe	Union
Delaware	Montgomery	Wayne
Franklin	Montour	Wyoming
Fulton	Northampton	York

The latest drought information including precipitation tables and water-conservation tips are available on the Pennsylvania homepage at [www.state.pa.us](http://www.state.pa.us) or directly at [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us) (choose Subjects/Water Management/Drought).

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