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## **State Declares Public Water Supply Emergency for Darien, Nearby Communities**

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**Date :** September 29, 2016

With drought conditions persisting and too little precipitation forecast for the foreseeable future, Connecticut Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Raul Pino today signed an order declaring a temporary 30-day public water supply emergency for four Fairfield County towns served by Aquarion Water Company (AWC): Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan.

Aquarion's water issues are also affecting several towns in nearby Westchester County, N.Y., who are also served by AWC: Rye, Ryebrook and Port Chester.

DPH is working closely with the New York State Health Department and the Westchester County Health Department to ensure an adequate water supply for all seven towns.

The rarely used declaration was requested by AWC to allow the company to divert water from other sources of supply to the four Connecticut towns which are facing a substantial depletion of their public water supply as a result of ongoing drought conditions.

DPH, in consultation with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA), determined that the declaration was necessary to prevent further depletion of the water supply. To view the Commissioner's Declaration and Order, please click [here](#).

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— [an announcement](#) from the Connecticut Department of Public Health

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"This is not a step that the Department of Public Health takes lightly or frequently, but it is clear that despite water conservation efforts taken by Aquarion and its customers, diversion of water from other areas in Aquarion's water supply in addition to continued mandatory water conservation measures is necessary to avert a much larger water crisis in these towns," said Commissioner Pino.

"Ensuring an adequate supply of safe drinking water remains our number one priority for protecting public health, and we will be monitoring the Aquarion situation very closely through a series of mandatory weekly reports and enhanced water quality testing by Aquarion."

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***See also:***

— [Tips on How to Save Water](#) (Sept. 29)

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"While this declaration deals specifically with these four towns and neighboring towns in New York, the entire state remains in a drought advisory, and I encourage all Connecticut residents to conserve water during this prolonged period of dry weather," added Commissioner Pino.

The DPH order places several conditions that AWC must meet for the duration of the public water supply emergency.

Those conditions include:

- prohibiting AWC adding new customers without prior approval by DPH;
- continuing mandatory outdoor watering bans for the CT and NY towns;
- requiring AWC to provide weekly public notifications on water supplies for the affected towns;
- requiring AWC to perform a water audit of its top 20 largest water users in the affected towns and assist users identifying ways to reduce usage; and
- providing several weekly reports to DPH, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and local health departments on water supply measurements, effectiveness of conservation practices, communications with town and local health officials in both the Connecticut and New York-affected towns, results of water quality monitoring, and information on daily water diversion totals.

The order will remain in effect for 30 days, but AWC can apply for additional 30 day extensions, up to a maximum of 150 days.

**Excerpt from an Aquarion Water Co. Announcement**

Aquarion Water Company issued [a news release](#) about the Department of Public Health ruling on Thursday. Here's an excerpt:

This DPH ruling will allow Aquarion the flexibility to transfer water between systems which will provide immediate short-term help.

In early July, Aquarion issued an advisory requesting customers voluntarily reduce water consumption. With the situation worsening because of a continuing lack of significant rainfall, on September 16 Aquarion declared a mandatory outdoor watering ban in Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan.

This ban covered irrigation systems, sprinklers, soaker hoses and hand held hoses. Aquarion has been promoting the immediate need for conservation, by calling and visiting customers, as well as using newspaper ads and direct mail, to make customers aware of this emergency situation. This has resulted in a lessening of daily demand.

Aquarion Water Company President and CEO, Charles V. Firlotte, said, “Without reducing demand and absent significant precipitation, the water supply situation in Greenwich, Stamford, New Canaan and Darien will not meet the needs of that region. The DPH declaration of an emergency is greatly needed.”