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NEWS RELEASE: Drought Advisory Update

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality sent this bulletin at 01/13/2026 10:35 AM EST

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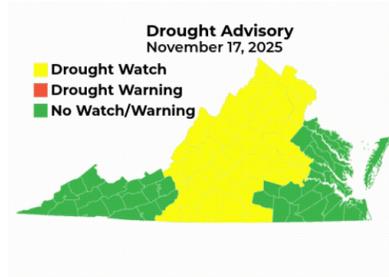
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 13, 2026

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DROUGHT ADVISORY UPDATE

*Drought warning issued for 22 counties and 13 cities
Drought watch advisory expanded to 61 counties and 18 cities*

Richmond, Va. – The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), in coordination with the [Virginia Drought Monitoring Task Force](#), has issued a drought warning advisory for 22 counties and 13 cities, and expanded the drought watch advisory to now include 61 counties and 18 cities in Virginia. Only 12 counties and 7 cities are not currently under drought watch or warning advisories.



A **drought warning** advisory is intended to increase awareness that the onset of a significant drought event is imminent and includes the following areas:

- **Northern Virginia:** Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, and Prince William counties and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park.
- **Roanoke River:** Bedford, Campbell, Charlotte, Franklin, Halifax, Henry, Mecklenburg, Patrick, Pittsylvania, and Roanoke counties and the cities of Danville, Martinsville, Roanoke, and Salem.
- **Shenandoah:** Augusta, Clarke, Frederick, Page, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren counties and the cities of Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Winchester.

A **drought watch** advisory is intended to help Virginians prepare for a potential drought and includes the following areas:

- **Chowan:** Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Lunenburg, Nottoway, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex counties and the cities of Emporia and Franklin.
- **Middle James:** Albemarle, Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Buckingham, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, Nelson, Powhatan, and Prince Edward counties and the cities of Charlottesville, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Lynchburg, Petersburg, and Richmond.
- **New River:** Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Wythe counties and the cities of Galax, and Radford.
- **Northern Coastal Plain:** Caroline, Essex, Gloucester, King George, King William, King and Queen, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland counties
- **Northern Piedmont:** Culpeper, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Orange, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, and Stafford counties and the city of Fredericksburg.
- **Upper James:** Alleghany, Bath, Botetourt, Craig, Highland, and Rockbridge counties and the cities of Buena Vista, Covington, and Lexington.
- **York-James:** Charles City, James City, New Kent, and York counties and the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Williamsburg.

Continued precipitation deficits have resulted in further declines and sustained much-below normal streamflow, groundwater, and soil moisture levels throughout most of the Commonwealth, especially in the Piedmont and Blue Ridge regions. Reservoir levels remain largely normal, except for Smith Mountain Lake, which is currently 0.2' below the warning level threshold and Lake Moomaw, which is currently 1.48' below the watch threshold.

DEQ is working with local governments, public water works, and water users in the affected areas to ensure that conservation and drought response plans and ordinances are followed. Localities and residents that are supplied water from the Potomac River should consult the [Metropolitan Washington Water Supply and Drought Awareness Response Plan](#) for specific triggers and actions to be taken. All Virginians are encouraged to protect water supplies by minimizing water use, monitoring drought conditions, and detecting and repairing leaks.

See the current drought status on the [DEQ website](#).

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About DEQ

The Department of Environmental Quality protects and enhances Virginia's environment and promotes the health and well being of the citizens of the Commonwealth. We are committed to cleaner water, improved air quality, and the productive re-use of contaminated land.

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