



Review and Discuss Draft Chapter 8 - Drought Response

Agenda Item 7

DRAFT Drought Response Recommendations

1. The RBC recommends that water utilities review and update their drought management plan and response ordinance now (if not recently updated), and then every 5 years or more frequently if conditions change. Once updated, the plans must be submitted to the SCO for review and approval. Changing conditions that could merit an update might include:

- Change in the source(s) of water
- Significant increase in water demand (such as the addition of a new, large wholesale customer)
- Significant change in the proportion of water used by one sector compared to another (e.g., residential versus commercial use)
- Addition (or loss) of another user relying on the same source of water
- New water supply agreement with a neighboring utility

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2. The RBC recommends that water utilities, when updating their drought management plan and response ordinance, look for opportunities to develop response actions that are consistent with those of neighboring utilities. While triggers are likely to be unique to each water utility based on their source(s) of water, coordination of response actions identified in their ordinance, to the extent practical, supports consistent messaging through the basin, and helps avoid confusion between customers. Many water utilities in the Broad River basin already meet monthly to discuss and coordinate on various water issues. This standing meeting offers the opportunity to discuss drought response actions, and improve the consistency of those actions, where feasible.

The RBC encourages water utilities and other water users to participate in state and/or regional drought tabletop exercises

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3. The RBC recommends that water utilities coordinate, to the extent practical, their drought response messaging. Drought messaging refers to both the content and the method or mechanism to deliver the message. During droughts in the early and late 2000s, many water utilities in the Broad River basin collaborated on outreach mechanisms. Billboards and other methods were used to encourage conservation and reduce water demand regardless of the water service area. Since that time, more targeted means to reach water customers have emerged including emails, text messages, automated phone calls, and social media. While the RBC recommends that coordinated messaging continue, the need to coordinate how the message is delivered has largely been eliminated because of the more effective outreach mechanisms. Coordination on the content of the messaging should continue through the standing, monthly meetings, and other means as appropriate.

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4. The RBC encourages water utilities in the basin to consider drought surcharges on water use during severe and/or extreme drought phases. Drought surcharges, when used, are typically only implemented if voluntary reductions are not successful in achieving the desired reduction in water use. In the Broad River basin, several water utilities have already built into their response ordinance the ability to implement drought surcharges during the severe and/or extreme drought phases. Two examples are detailed below:

Example 1: The ICWD may, at its option, implement the following excessive use rate schedule for water for its residential customers during severe and extreme drought phases:

Tier	Water Usage (gallons per month)	Rate
I	0–5,000	Regular water rate
II	5,000–12,000	Two times the regular water rate
III	Over 12,001	Three times the regular water rate

Example 2: In the event of an extreme drought, Greer CPW limits domestic water use to 55 gallons per household member per day and may include a surcharge of \$0.02 per gallon for use above that limit. Institutional, commercial, industrial, and recreational water users are subject to water use surcharges of \$20 per 1,000 gallons of water used if it is deemed that adequate conservation measures were not implemented.

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5. When droughts occur, the RBC encourages water users and those with water interests to submit their drought impact observations through the **Condition Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR)**. The CMOR system, maintained by the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC), provides supporting evidence in the form of on-the-ground information to help the authors of the U.S. Drought Monitor better understand local conditions. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) uses the Drought Monitor to trigger disaster declarations and determine eligibility for low-interest loans and some assistance programs. The SCO also reviews and uses the CMOR system in a variety of ways. CMORs can be submitted by clicking the “Submit a Report” button at the NDMC’s Drought Impacts Toolkit website.



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6. The RBC encourages water utilities to report their drought management and response best practices to the SCO. The SCO is reviewing and compiling best practices, and providing example best practices to other utilities who are developing or updating their plans.

7. The RBC reminds water utilities that, when they enter moderate, extreme, or severe phase of their Drought Response Plan, they are to notify the SCO (through e-mail). Having this information helps the SCO understand the extent and severity of drought impacts.