

Joint Legislative Committee on Water Supply During Drought

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Water Resources Program

Overview

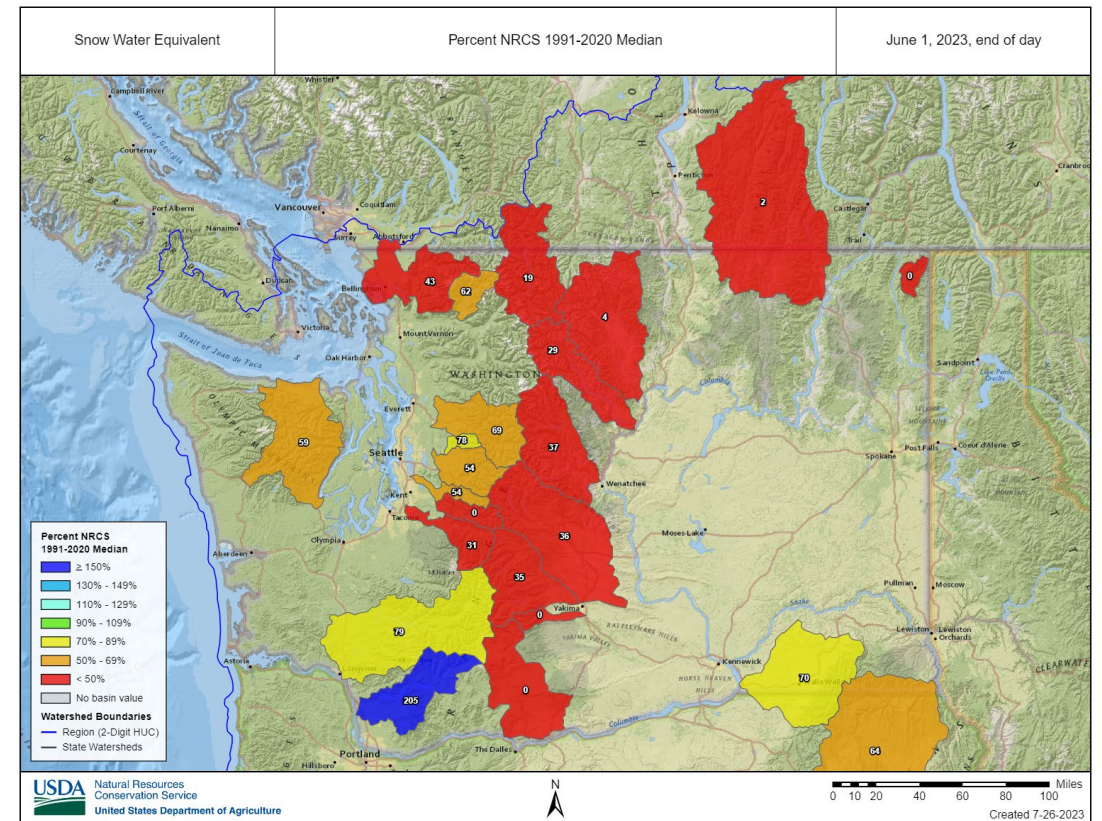
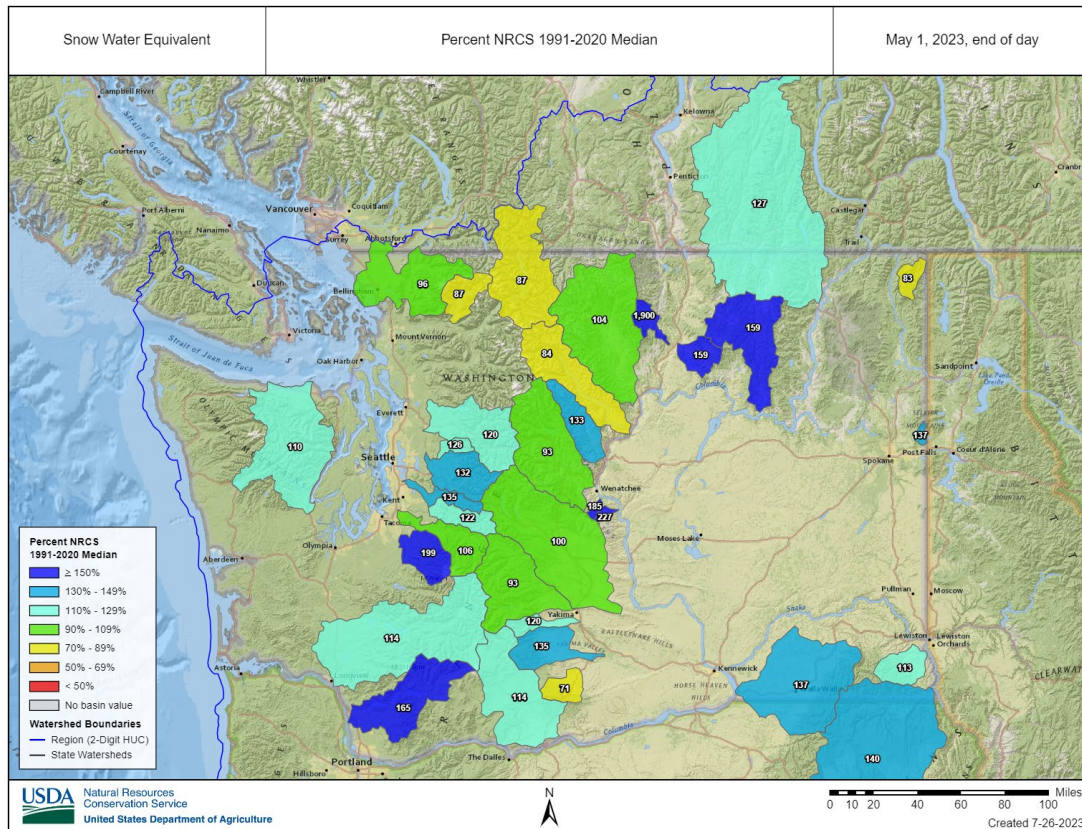
- Conditions that led to drought declaration
 - Water supply projections
 - Hardship determination
- Drought declaration
- HB 1138
- Next steps for drought response

What is drought?

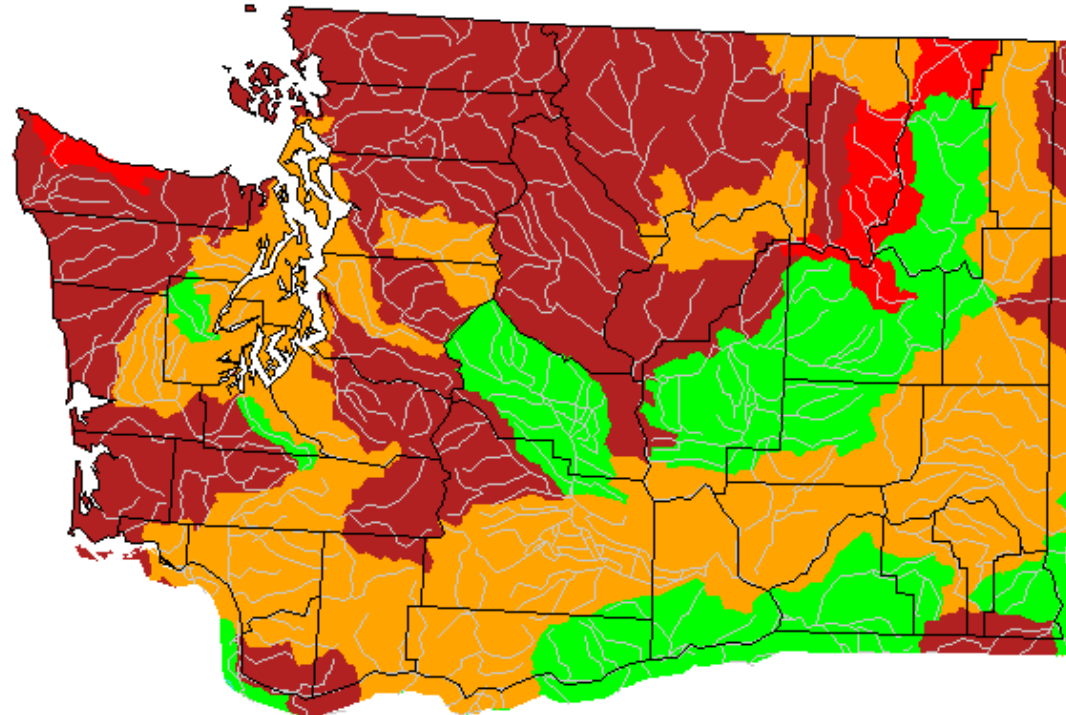
RCW 43.83B.011(2) "Drought condition" means that the water supply for a geographic area, or for a significant portion of a geographic area, is below seventy-five percent of normal and the water shortage is likely to create undue hardships for water users or the environment.

WAC 173-166-030 (6) The determination of drought conditions will consider seasonal water supply forecasts, other relevant hydro-meteorological factors (e.g., precipitation, snowpack, soil moisture, streamflow, and aquifer levels) and also may consider extreme departures from normal conditions over subseasonal time frames.

May Snowpack Melt



28-day average streamflow



Explanation - Percentile classes							
Low	<10	10-24	25-75	76-90	>90	High	No Data
	Much below normal	Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above normal		

Watersheds

Impacts/Hardship Summary

Nooksack

- At least three public water systems' wells are not functioning.
- Irrigators with water rights junior to instream flow rule are curtailed.

Upper Skagit Lower Skagit

- Irrigators with water rights junior to instream flow rule are curtailed.
- Skagit Drainage and Irrigation District Consortium petitioned for a drought declaration (representing 12,800 acres of farmland).
- Loss of high value crops without emergency transfer from Skagit PUD.

Dungeness

- Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe notified Ecology about likely fish passage barriers on the Dungeness River if flow drops below 140 cubic feet per second, predicted to occur in mid August.

Lyre-Hoko Sol Duc-Hoh

- Clallam County PUD's Island View Water System is trucking water to all 34 customers.
- The Makah Tribe moved fish from their hatchery to a Quilcene hatchery. The Tribe is using part of their freshwater supply fighting brushfires.

Watersheds

Impacts/Hardship Summary

Methow

- Irrigators with water rights junior to instream flow rule are curtailed.

Okanogan

- Irrigators with water rights junior to instream flow rule are curtailed.

Upper Yakima

- Bureau of Reclamation has pro-rated junior districts (e.g., Roza, Kittitas Reclamation District, Wapato Irrigation Project) to 72 percent of normal.
- Some mid-season fallowing has already occurred.

Naches

- Some cherry trees are not being watered post-harvest. Concerns about crop stress and reduced crop yields.

Lower Yakima

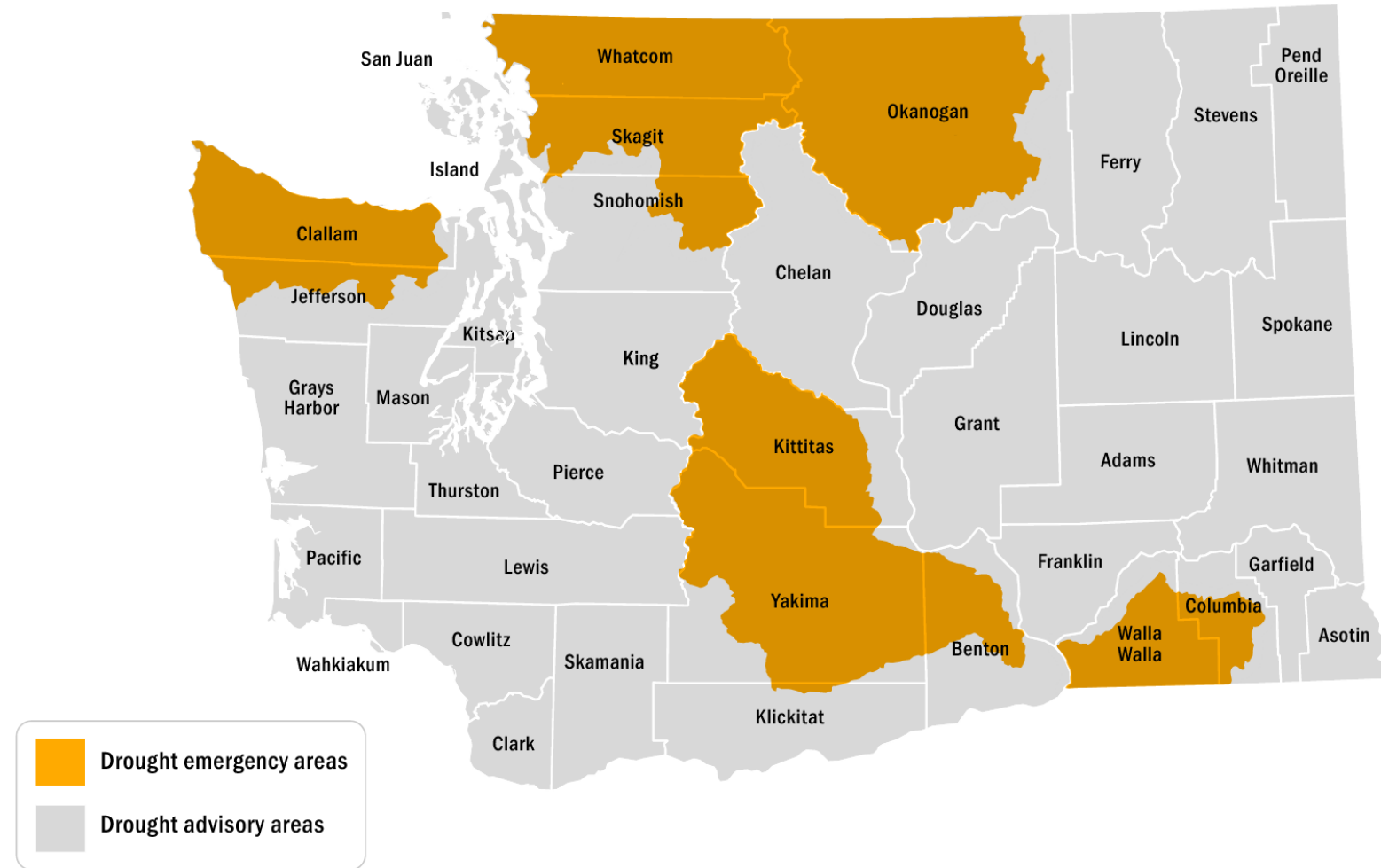
- Significant concern for late-season water availability.
- 157 rights held by junior districts are currently under curtailment.

Walla Walla

- The Walla Walla River is completely dry in some places.
- Irrigators were curtailed beginning June 7.
- Watermaster reported there is “no water left to transfer.” Focusing on junior right holders to get some water when senior right holders stop taking water. Crop loss has been reported by the State Conservation Commission.

Washington Drought Declaration Areas

Drought Declaration



Drought declared on July 24, 2023

Drought Declaration

Counties affected by the drought declaration include: Benton, Clallam, Columbia, Jefferson, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Skagit, Snohomish, Walla Walla, Whatcom and Yakima.

The rest of the state remains under the drought advisory issued by Ecology July 5.

Provides Ecology with authority:

- Expedite emergency water transfer applications.
- Establish a grant program to mitigate hardships to water users and the environment.



SHB 1138

Major elements of the bill include:

- \$2 M for FY 23-25 for drought planning, preparedness and climate resiliency
- \$3 M available to Ecology immediately when a drought is declared
- Emergency response projects do not have to be completed during declared drought
- 50 percent non-state match



Emergency response funding

Grants to governmental entities:

- Counties, cities, and towns.
- Water and sewer districts formed under chapter 57.02 RCW.
- Public utility districts formed under chapter 54.04 RCW.
- Port districts formed under chapter 53.04 RCW.
- Conservation districts formed under chapter 89.08 RCW.
- Irrigation districts formed under chapter 87.03 RCW.
- Watershed management partnerships formed under RCW 39.34.200.
- Federally recognized tribes.

Interagency agreements to state agencies

Current Status for Emergency Grant Opportunity

- July 24: Drought declared
- July 24: File emergency funding rule, chapter 173-167 WAC
- July 25: Began accepting grant proposals
- Nov 20: End of current grant solicitation



Thank you

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