

Lancaster County Water & Sewer District

Extended dry weather puts Catawba-Wateree Basin in Stage 1 drought

LCWSD customers are requested to conserve water by avoiding unnecessary outdoor watering and following a set schedule

For Immediate Release

April 16, 2026: The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) announced today that extremely dry weather conditions have placed the Catawba-Wateree River Basin in Stage 1 of the group's Low Inflow Protocol (LIP). As a result, voluntary water conservation is requested by all water users across the basin, including customers of the Lancaster County Water & Sewer District (LCWSD).

During drought, Duke Energy's hydroelectric plants continue to operate but at reduced levels to preserve water storage in the lakes. Duke Energy is requesting lake neighbors who withdraw water from the Catawba-Wateree lakes for irrigation voluntarily limit watering to Tuesdays and Saturdays and only use the minimum amount of water necessary.

As a member of the Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group, Lancaster County Water & Sewer District (LCWSD) is required to implement its Incipient Drought Phase / CW DMAG Stage 1. Stage 1 is a drought stage that requires the first phase of voluntary reductions from LCWSD's customers in the use of water for all purposes.

Specifically, the goal during Stage 1 is to achieve a reduction of 3-5% in overall water use. LCWSD customers are requested to follow conservation measures as follows:

- *Avoid lawn, garden or other heavy irrigation if possible. If you must water, please use the following schedule:*
 - *Even number addresses: **Tuesdays and Saturdays from 2 am until 10 am***
 - *Odd or un-numbered addresses: **Wednesdays and Sundays from 2 am until 10 am***
- *Avoid non-essential uses such as refilling of pools and vehicle washing*

LCWSD will be providing a communication outreach to local Homeowner Associations to promote conservation measures during drought conditions.

Due to below average rainfall since September 2025, water storage in the 11 reservoirs of the Catawba-Wateree River Basin has decreased and stream flows that feed the reservoirs are well below normal.

"We are in the eighth consecutive month of rainfall that is below the long-term average, and tributary stream flows remain very low—some areas receiving less than half their median levels," said Phil Fragapane of Duke Energy and the CW-DMAG coordinator. "We will continue to monitor conditions and provide updates as needed to help protect the shared

water supply for our communities.”

"We aim to raise awareness about increased drought conditions and promote responsible water use," said Jimmy Bagley, City of Rock Hill's Deputy City Manager and Chair of the Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group. "By cooperating as a community and starting conservation efforts early, we can help protect our collective water resources. Everyone uses water in their daily lives and with over 2 million people using water from this basin, we are asking everyone to take action to reduce their water use."

The LIP is the drought management protocol major water users in the Catawba-Wateree River Basin use to share responsibility and set priorities to conserve the limited water supply during drought. Stage 1 is the second of five drought stages outlined in the protocol and it requests voluntary water conservation across the basin.

The CW-DMAG was established in 2006 to monitor drought status and to recommend coordinated actions for CW-DMAG members. CW-DMAG members include the area's public water suppliers and several large industrial users withdrawing water from the river and lake system, North Carolina and South Carolina resource agencies, other federal agencies and Duke Energy.

The CW-DMAG and the LIP resulted from Duke Energy's relicensing process for the Catawba- Wateree Hydroelectric Project. The LIP is part of Duke Energy's federal operating license issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The CW-DMAG meets at least monthly when conditions reach Stage 0 or greater of the LIP. For more information about CW-DMAG and the LIP, visit <https://www.duke-energy.com/Community/Lakes/Drought-Management-Advisory/Catawba-Wateree-DMAG>.

If community members have specific questions about voluntary water use restrictions, they are encouraged to contact Lancaster County Water & Sewer District or visit our website at <https://www.lcwasd.org>.