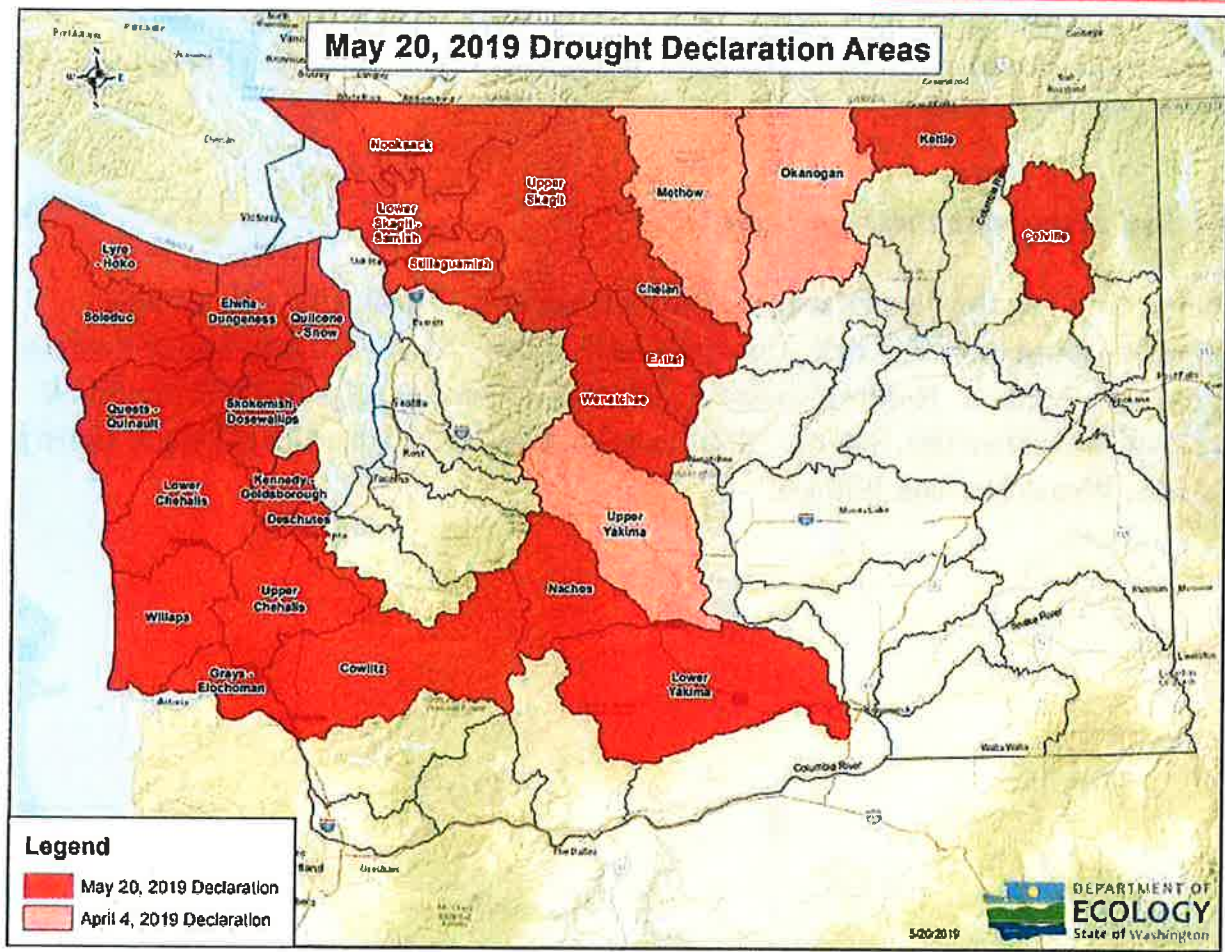


Gov. Inslee declares drought for nearly half of Washington state

SEATTLE TIMES

May 20, 2019 at 12:05 pm Updated May 20, 2019 at 12:29 pm

FILE UNDER AB
 DATE RECEIVED: 2019-256 5/21/2019
 SUBMITTED BY: ~~Steve Jilk~~ Steve Jilk
 Public Utility District
 COUNCIL MEETING
 Natural Resources COMMITTEE
 EXHIBIT:



Washington Gov. Jay Inslee has declared drought for much of Washington state.

Winter left many areas of the state with lower-than-normal snowpack. A hot, dry spring quickly zapped much of the snow that did accumulate.

Every water basin in the state is below the 30-year median for snowpack, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#). Many in Central and Western Washington sit below 50%.

The Upper Yakima basin — where valuable crops like asparagus, hops and tree fruits grow — currently sits at just 23 percent of its typical median.

“The shortage creates a strong possibility of undue hardship for water users, including agricultural irrigators, as well as municipal and community public drinking water systems,” Inslee wrote in his drought declaration, which is dated May 13.

The governor declared drought for the Methow, Okanogan and Upper Yakima basins in April. He added 24 more basins this month.

Several large municipal water systems will be able to meet residents’ needs this summer.

The water systems of Seattle, Everett and Tacoma “report that they have sufficient water supply for people and fish this summer. Their water managers are watching the weather forecasts and encourage customers to continue to use water wisely,” according to a news release from the governor’s office.

Drought declared in these watersheds

Chelan, Colville, Cowlitz, Deschutes, Elwha-Dungeness, Entiat, Grays-Elochoman, Kennedy-Goldsborough, Kettle, Lower Chehalis, Lower Skagit-Samish, Lower Yakima, Lyre-Hoko, Methow, Naches, Nooksack, Okanogan, Queets-Quinault, Quilcene-Snow, Skokomish-Dosewallips, Soleduc, Stillaguamish, Upper Chehalis, Upper Skagit, Upper Yakima, Wenatchee, and Willapa.

JAY INSLEE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Office of the Governor

May 13, 2019

Maia D. Bellon, Director
Department of Ecology
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Director Bellon:

Based on the recommendation from the Executive Water Emergency Committee, I affirm that drought conditions in the state of Washington have expanded since the previous drought emergency declaration on April 4, 2019. Therefore, I hereby authorize and direct you, as Director of the Department of Ecology, to take action, including necessary orders, to formally declare a drought emergency in the following areas:


Colville	Grays-Elochman	Soleduc
Kettle	Willapa	Lye-Hoko
Chelan	Upper Chehalis	Elwha-Dungeness
Entiat	Lower Chehalis	Quilcene-Snow
Wenatchee	Deschutes	Stillaguamish
Naches	Kennedy-Goldsborough	Lower Skagit-Samish
Lower Yakima	Skokomish-Dosewallips	Upper Skagit
Cowlitz	Queets-Quinalt	Nooksack

Snowpack levels, precipitation, and soil moisture in these watersheds are much below normal. Forecasts by the National Weather Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service indicate a high probability that rivers in these watersheds will experience extreme low conditions.

This shortage creates a strong possibility of undue hardship for water users, including agricultural irrigators, as well as municipal and community public drinking water systems. Reduced stream-flows in these watersheds could cause deleterious effects on fisheries. I encourage the Department of Ecology to coordinate with other state agencies, federal agencies, tribes, and water users to help protect our important human, economic, and natural resources.

Together, I want us to ensure that Washingtonians have the information and assistance they need to get through this drought in the best shape possible. Throughout the coming months, I would like the Department of Ecology and other agencies to keep me informed about the latest drought conditions and the effects on residents and resources.

Very truly yours,


Jay Inslee
Governor



