



City of Seattle  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

**TACOMA WATER**  
TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**JOINTLY FROM THE CITIES OF EVERETT, SEATTLE AND TACOMA**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Everett, Seattle, Tacoma activate water shortage response plans**

*Region's customers advised to carefully manage water use*

**Puget Sound Region** (July 27, 2015) Historic low river levels – combined with record-setting hot and dry weather that have significantly increased the demand for water – have led Everett, Seattle and Tacoma to implement the first stage of their water shortage response plans.

The three cities are all activating their response plans as a precautionary measure and have joined together to ensure that the entire region is ready for a potential water shortage.

### **Everett**

Everett's water outlook is fair. Calculations show that Everett has adequate water to supply Snohomish County through the summer and fall when the region typically gets rainfall that replenishes water supplies.

"The weather has not been normal this year," said Mayor Ray Stephanson. "We want to be cautious to ensure that we have adequate supply for all Everett's customers, which includes most of Snohomish County, and sufficient water to meet instream flow requirements for fish."

Everett is activating Stage 1 of its [Drought Response Plan](#) as a proactive measure.

Everett operates a regional water supply system that serves 80 percent of the homes and businesses in Snohomish County. This includes Everett and 95 other cities and water districts and serves a population of about 570,000.

### **Seattle**

Seattle's water supply outlook is fair and, like Everett, supply is projected to be adequate until fall rains typically return. With today's activation of its [Water Shortage Contingency Plan](#), the



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city is taking the needed steps to further maximize its water supply for people and fish in the event this unusual weather continues.

“The City is making water system adjustments and I know Seattle customers will continue to do their part as we plan for more hot and dry weather,” said Mayor Edward Murray. “We want Seattle and the entire region to be in the best possible shape with water supply when the fall rains return.”

Seattle operates a regional water supply system that serves Seattle as well as 25 other cities and water districts in King County.

### **Tacoma**

Tacoma’s normal use of the Green River for summer demands is being heavily augmented with groundwater wells in this unusual year. This shift allows water stored from the Green River to be primarily dedicated to protecting fish. Although Tacoma’s modeling shows supplies adequate to meet instream flow and customer demands, initiating stage 1 of the [Water Shortage Response Plan](#) will provide a cushion.

“With the help of our customers, diligent monitoring and coordination with natural resource agencies, we believe we can make it through this extraordinary year with enough water to meet the needs of people and fish,” said Mayor Marilyn Strickland.

Tacoma Water supplies water directly to about 316,000 people in Tacoma, University Place, Ruston and areas of unincorporated Pierce and south King counties. We also serve relatively small areas within the cities of Puyallup, Fircrest, Lakewood and Bonney Lake. Through wholesale connections, we serve water to people in Auburn, Bonney Lake, Fife, Puyallup and parts of Pierce and King counties.

### **Advisory Stage of Response Plans**

The first stage in each city’s response plan is “advisory.” It’s issued when utilities believe a potential water supply problem may exist. During this time Everett, Seattle and Tacoma are asking customers to carefully manage their water use and make sure they are not wasting water.

Important examples include:

- **Watering early or late:** Water before 8 a.m. or after 7 p.m., which reduces evaporation.
- **Watering deeply, but infrequently:** It’s better to have one or two deep waterings, rather than several shallow waterings.
- **Fixing leaks:** Fix obvious indoor and outdoor leaks such as at faucets, hose bibs and sprinkler spray heads. Check for less obvious leaks such as silent toilet leaks. Put several drops of food coloring in your toilet tank; after 10 minutes if you have color in the toilet bowl, you have a flapper leak.
- **Washing vehicles wisely:** Wash your vehicle(s) at locations that recycle their water.



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- **Using a broom, not a hose:** Use a broom, rather than a hose, to clean sidewalks, driveways and patios.
- **Washing full loads:** Wait until your clothes washer and dishwasher are full before starting.

Find more water saving tips at [www.savingwater.org](http://www.savingwater.org), [www.everettwa.gov/conservationtips](http://www.everettwa.gov/conservationtips) and [www.tacomawater.com/smart](http://www.tacomawater.com/smart).

All three cities are making operational changes and activating supplementary water supplies – all in an effort to stretch their water supplies as far as possible.

Everett, Seattle and Tacoma are all fortunate to have robust water supplies that allow the water utilities to meet customer needs for water and contribute to healthy fish populations. Available supplies this year have declined more quickly than is typical.

Activating our response plans is a prudent management step given current conditions and supply outlook.

Everett, Seattle and Tacoma work collaboratively on a wide range of water supply, treatment and resource issues. Collectively, we serve close to half the state's population, and each draws its primary water supply from watersheds on the western slopes of the Cascades.

If conditions worsen, each city may move to the “voluntary” phase of water shortage response and ask customers to reduce the amount of water they normally use each day.

### **More Information**

For more information about Everett's water supply situation visit Everett's website at [www.everettwa.gov/droughtresponse](http://www.everettwa.gov/droughtresponse).

A weekly report on Seattle's water supply is available on the Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) [website](http://www.seattle.gov/util). Learn more about SPU at: [www.seattle.gov/util](http://www.seattle.gov/util).

A weekly report on Tacoma's water supply is available at [MyTPU.org/watersupply](http://MyTPU.org/watersupply).

[Get a map of the three cities' distribution areas.](#)