

Permanent Drought Relief Rulemaking

Focus on Fall 2024 Engagement

Background

Ecology is amending the Emergency Drought Relief rule ([chapter 173-166 WAC](#)), that details Ecology’s drought declaration and drought relief management processes and procedures.

This rulemaking seeks to streamline emergency drought relief administration and add clarity to processes and terms related to emergency drought relief and the drought declaration process.

Why rulemaking?

As droughts become more common with a changing climate, an updated drought rule will increase efficiency and transparency around emergency drought relief.

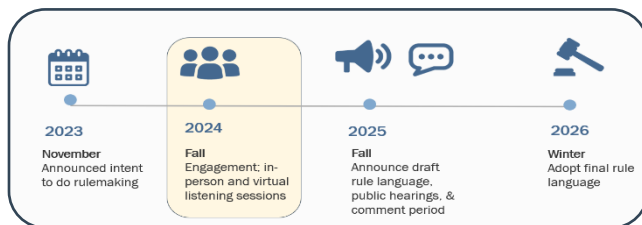
What is considered “drought”?

Washington State law defines “drought” as: (1) water supply in an area below 75% of normal, and (2) water shortage is likely to create undue hardships for water users or the environment (RCW 43.83B.011)

Timeline

This is the beginning of a multi-year rulemaking process.

- November 2023, Rulemaking Announcement CR-101
- NOW: Outreach and engagement.
- Anticipate Draft rule language (CR-102) for comment in fall 2025.
- Targeting winter 2026 for rule adoption.



How your input will be used

Comments received through listening sessions and the survey will inform the development of draft rule language. Ecology anticipates draft rule language will be available for public comment in fall 2025. Ecology will hold public hearings for oral testimony and written comments can be submitted online at that time.

We want to hear from you!

Drought conditions impact communities in different ways. We need input from diverse perspectives from across the state.

Opportunities to participate

Ecology will hold both in person and virtual listening sessions this fall to discuss the goals and scope of the rulemaking. These sessions will include discussion questions with opportunities to share feedback. Those who are unable to attend can also provide comments through a survey.

In-person open house listening sessions:

- **Twisp:** October 15, 2024 @ Methow Valley Community Center 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- **Yakima:** October 16, 2024 @ WA Fruit Community Center 4:00pm – 6:00pm
- **Tacoma:** October 22, 2024 @ Tacoma Community College 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Public Virtual listening sessions:

- October 24, 2024 via [Zoom @ 3:00pm](#)
- October 30, 2024 via [Zoom @ 6:00pm](#)

Survey

- Open October 7, 2024 – November 22, 2024
- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Drought-rule>

Related information

- Visit drought.wa.gov
- Visit the rulemaking page <https://ecology.wa.gov/wac-173-166>

- Sign up to stay informed on this rulemaking <https://ecology.wa.gov/WRP-updates-subscribe>



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To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6872 or email at WRpubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.