Rule Implementation Plan

Chapter 173-167 WAC

Emergency Drought Funding (2026 filing)

By

Danielle Gallatin

For the

Water Resources Program

Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington

August 2026, Publication 26-11-015

Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's website at:
https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2611015.html

Related Information

- Drought Response, EAGL IGX Application Instructions 2026[1], Pub# 26-11-014
- Drought Response Grant Funding Guidance[2], Pub# 26-11-013
- Rulemaking WAC 173-167, 2026[3], webpage

Contact Information

Water Resources Program

P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
Phone: 360-407-6872
Website[4]: Washington State Department of Ecology

ADA Accessibility

The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Washington State Policy #188.

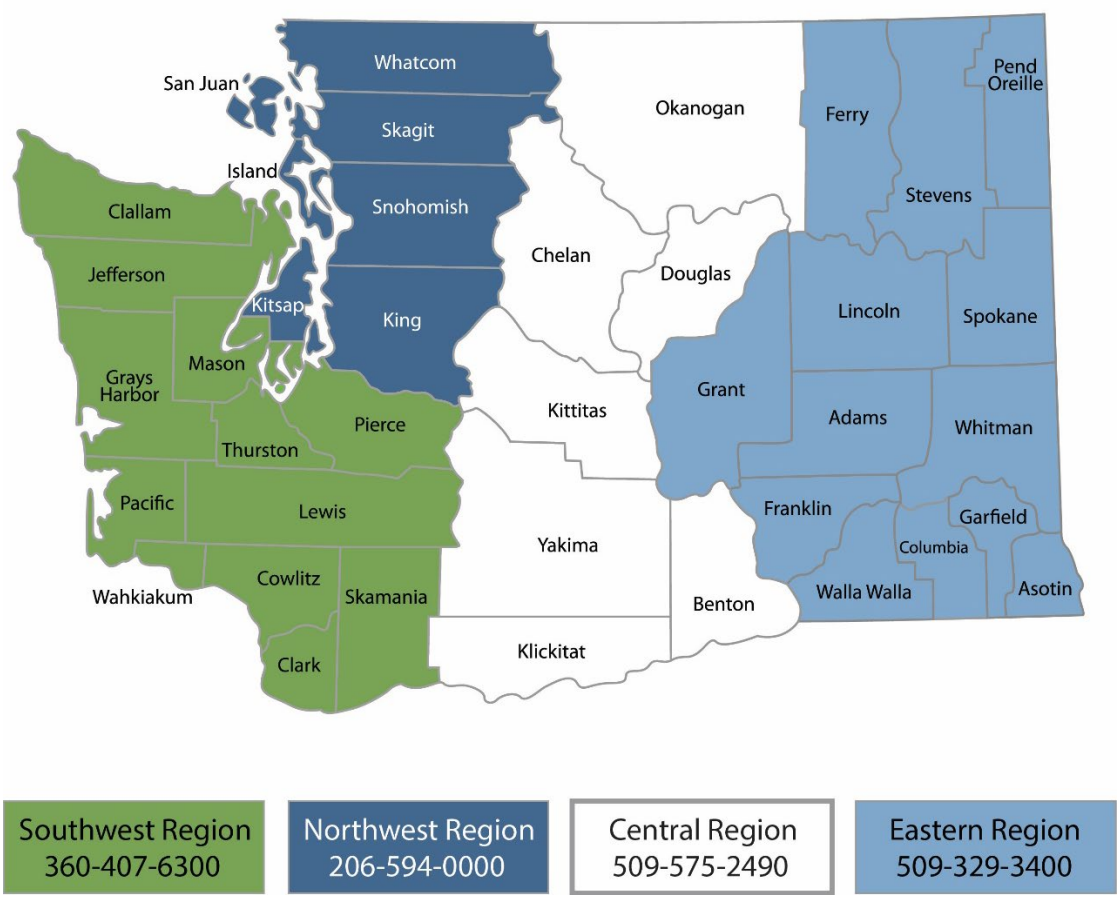
To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6872 or email at WRpubs@ecy.wa.gov. For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341. Visit Ecology's website for more information.

---

[1] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2611014.html
[2] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/summarypages/2611013.html
[3] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/laws-rules-rulemaking/rulemaking/wac-173-167-2026
[4] www.ecology.wa.gov/contact

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

Map of Counties Served



Region	Counties served	Mailing Address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	P.O. Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	P.O. Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima	1250 West Alder Street Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman	4601 North Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400
Headquarters	Statewide	P.O. Box 46700 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

Rule Implementation Plan

Chapter 173-167 WAC
Emergency Drought Funding (2026 filing)

Water Resources Program
Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, WA

August 2026 | Publication 26-11-015



Table of Contents

Purpose 1

Introduction 2

Implementation and Enforcement 3

Informing and Educating Persons Affected by the Rule 4

Promoting and Assisting Voluntary Compliance 5

Evaluating the Rule 6

Training and Informing Ecology Staff 7

List of Supporting Documents that May Need to be Written or Revised 8

More Information 9

Contact Information 10

Purpose

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) provides the information in this implementation plan to meet agency and Administrative Procedure Act (RCW 34.05.328) requirements related to rule adoptions.

Introduction

On April 7, 2026, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) issued a statewide Drought Emergency order, and adopting an emergency drought funding rule chapter 173-167 WAC. Because emergency rules expire after 120 days, the emergency drought funding rule is being adopted again to allow the existing drought response grant program to continue without interruption, enabling Ecology to continue to provide relief to eligible entities.

The purpose of this rule implementation plan is to inform those who must comply with chapter 173-167 WAC about how Ecology intends to continue to implement the following:

- Implement and enforce the rule.
- Inform and educate persons affected by the rule.
- Promote and assist voluntary compliance for the rule.
- Evaluate the rule.
- Train and inform Ecology staff about the new or amended rule.

Also included in this plan is information about:

- Supporting documents that may need to be written or revised because of the new rule or amended rule.
- Other resources where more information about the rule is available.
- Contact information for Ecology employees who can answer questions about the rule implementation.

Implementation and Enforcement

Ecology's Water Resources Program staff at headquarters and regional offices will implement this rule. The emergency drought grant program will continue to provide funding to implement measures that reduce hardship caused by drought. Ecology staff will make funding decisions based on the applicant and eligibility criteria defined in the rule.

This rule does not create a compliance or enforcement obligation for the regulated public. There is no anticipated enforcement related to this rule. Voluntary applicants must meet eligibility criteria and agency grant/contract standards (see "Promoting and Assisting Voluntary Compliance" and the "More Information" sections).

Informing and Educating Persons Affected by the Rule

Upon the reissued rule adoption, Ecology will notify Tribes, notify other interested parties, send Listserv notifications (Washington Water Supply list, Water Resources list, Water Resources Advisory Committee list, WAC Track list), and post updates to our website.

Ecology has produced grant application guidance, and staff will be available to provide technical assistance for applicants throughout the process.

Promoting and Assisting Voluntary Compliance

This rule does not create a compliance obligation for the regulated public. Those who wish to apply for funding through the emergency drought grant program are required to meet eligibility requirements set in rule. The rule language, the grant website, the grant guidance, and the Tier 2 application and accompanying instructions provide additional guidance on how we will evaluate project proposals and support applicants in developing sound proposals. Ecology staff will also be available to provide technical assistance.

Ecology will support local partners promoting voluntary water conservation using methods and messaging that have worked well in the past.

Evaluating the Rule

Public entities may continue to experience impacts from drought at various times throughout the current drought declaration and reissuance of the emergency drought funding rule. Balancing the immediate need with long-term planning is critical. In balancing these interests, it is essential that projects are chosen based on their effectiveness to alleviate immediate emergency drought-related hardship and will be implemented in a timely fashion. Since funding is limited, the agency will continue to prioritize the most immediate and imminent threats including projects that address imminent human health, fisheries, and agricultural emergency drought needs. Fulfilling these criteria will in turn help us determine effectiveness of rule implementation.

Training and Informing Ecology Staff

Ecology will use staff meetings, the agency website, and e-mail to train and inform agency staff about the emergency drought grant funding. The agency drought funding coordinator, fiscal staff, and regional representatives will collaborate to continue to implement the rule.

List of Supporting Documents that May Need to be Written or Revised

All documents related to this grant program were updated in April 2026 and August 2026.

- Guidance on 2026 emergency drought funding under chapter 173-167 WAC, available at https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2611013.html
- Instructions for applicants for emergency drought funding, available at https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2611014.html

More Information

Links to more information:

- Rule webpage – https:// ecology.wa.gov /regulations-permits/laws-rules-rulemaking/rulemaking/wac-173-167-2026
- Drought response webpage – https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/water-supply/water-availability/statewide-conditions/drought-response

Contact Information

Danielle Gallatin
425-516-3012
Danielle.gallatin@ecy.wa.gov
Rulemaking
PO BOX 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

For Parcel Service

Department of Ecology
Water Resources Program
300 Desmond Dr SE
Lacey, WA 98503