



Spencer J. Cox
Governor

**EXECUTIVE ORDER
2026-02**

Declaring a State of Emergency in the State of Utah Due to Drought Conditions

WHEREAS, all 29 counties in the state are in severe drought and 22 counties are in extreme drought according to the U.S. Drought Monitor;

WHEREAS, snowpack peaked about three weeks early and was 53% of normal, and average winter temperatures were nearly 3 degrees higher than normal;

WHEREAS, water supply forecasts around the state range from 20% to 55% of normal;

WHEREAS, these extreme drought conditions have adversely and significantly impacted agribusiness and livestock production, as well as wildlife and natural habitats;

WHEREAS, drought conditions can adversely impact drinking water supplies and increase the number of drinking water emergencies requiring boil orders or Do Not Drink orders;

WHEREAS, drought conditions that require mitigation are expected to persist;

WHEREAS, these conditions create a state of emergency under the Disaster Response and Recovery Act found in Title 53, Chapter 2a of the Utah Code;

WHEREAS, the Disaster Response and Recovery Act found in Title 53, Chapter 2a of the Utah Code provides the governor with certain powers to respond to an emergency;

WHEREAS, Utah Code § 53-2a-204(1)(a) authorizes the governor to utilize all available resources of state government as reasonably necessary to cope with a state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, Utah Code § 53-2a-204(1)(b) authorizes the governor to employ measures and give direction to state and local officers and agencies that are reasonable and necessary for the purpose of securing compliance with orders made pursuant to the Disaster Response and Recovery Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Spencer J. Cox, Governor of the State of Utah, declare a state of emergency due to the aforesaid circumstances in the counties listed above and hereby order the following:

1. The state Emergency Operations Plan is activated.
2. The state Drought Response Committee shall:
 - a. review circumstances and other needs caused by the drought;
 - b. identify and recommend action to meet those needs; and
 - c. ensure inter-agency coordination.
3. State agencies shall:
 - a. follow current requirements as outlined in Executive Order 2023-07; and
 - b. as required in Utah Code § 63-5b-1108(5)(a), follow the Division of Water Resources' weekly watering guide: <https://conservewater.utah.gov/weekly-lawn-watering-guide/>.

I further make the following recommendations:

1. Water suppliers and irrigation companies should consider:
 - a. encouraging efficient landscape watering; and
 - b. as needed, contacting the Division of Water Resources for assistance with developing a local drought response plan.
2. Impacted cities and counties should consider developing and implementing water restriction plans and taking other steps to promote water conservation for the upcoming irrigation season in order to protect drinking water supplies.
3. Residents are encouraged to:
 - a. reduce outdoor water use and waste;
 - b. fix irrigation leaks and inefficiencies;
 - c. consider converting unnecessary lawn areas to waterwise landscapes with drip irrigation;
 - d. consider purchasing a smart-timer controller or low-flow toilet (rebates are offered at SlowTheFlow.org); and
 - e. reduce indoor water use by fixing leaks.

THIS ORDER is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for 30 days, unless the Legislature extends the state of emergency.



IN WITNESS, WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Utah. Done on this, the 21st day of May, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Spencer J. Cox', written in a cursive style.

Spencer J. Cox
Governor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deidre M. Henderson', written in a cursive style.

Deidre M. Henderson
Lieutenant Governor