

South Carolina Current Drought Status

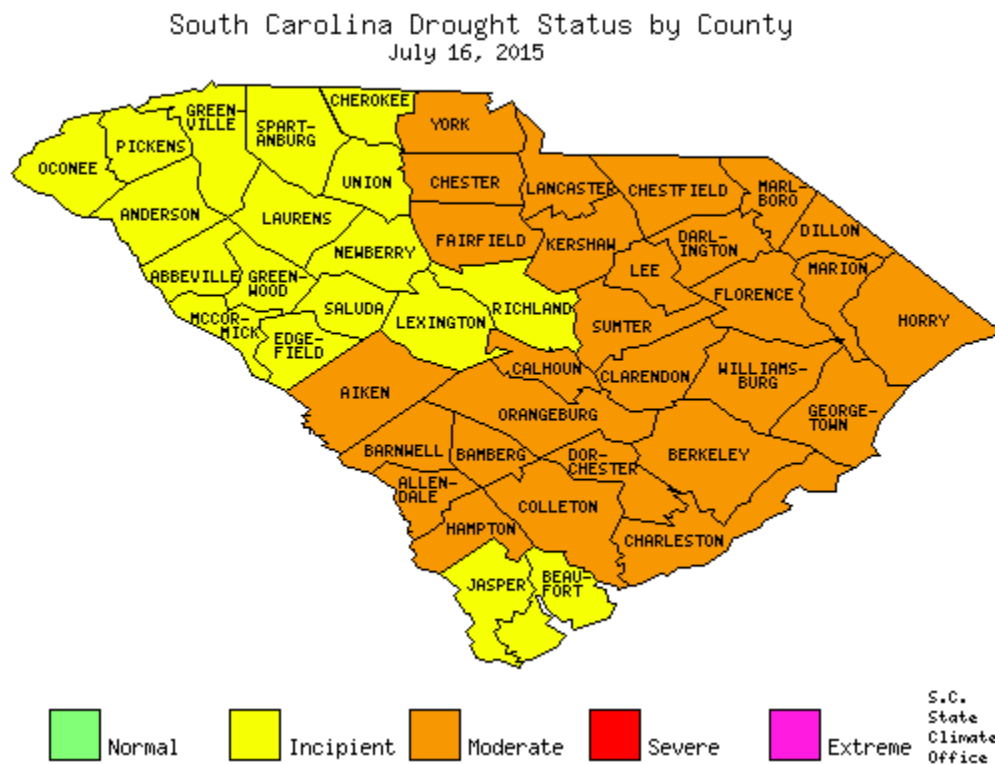
State Climate Office

NEWS RELEASE

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July 16, 2015

All of South Carolina now under drought status



The S.C. Drought Response Committee, meeting via conference call on July 16, has upgraded the drought status of the entire state. Previously on June 19 the committee had designated 28 counties to the first level of drought. Those counties are now in the second or moderate stage of drought.

The counties upgraded to the moderate stage of drought include Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Bamberg, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Fairfield, Florence, Georgetown, Hampton, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, Williamsburg and York. All other counties in South Carolina are now in the first level of drought or incipient.

The purpose of the moderate declaration is to increase awareness that drought conditions are intensifying. Water systems are asked to review their Drought Response Plans and Ordinances and implement as needed.

"It's clear that drought is affecting folks all across the state. Irrigation has helped provide moisture to some crops, but it doesn't replace a good soaking rain," said S.C. Department of

Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers. "This summer's weather further illustrates the partnership that farmers have with Mother Nature. The short-term forecast isn't optimistic, but we'll continue to pray for relief from the heat and drought."

"Duke Energy strongly supports the Drought Committee's moving the drought classification to moderate based on the very low stream flows, dry soil moisture and widespread low rainfall amounts over the last 30 days. Duke Energy is concerned with lake levels and is carefully managing hydroelectric operations under these conditions," stated George Galleher, principal engineer with Duke Energy.

"Due to below normal rainfall over the past several months, streamflow levels have dropped considerably and are well below normal for this time of year," reported Scott Harder, S.C. Department of Natural Resources hydrologist. "These low streamflows have caused small but steady declines in most of the state's major reservoirs and most of the reservoirs are currently below their target levels."

Bobby Brock with the Marlboro Water Company and Northeast Drought Committee said, "Several farmers in Marlboro County agree that the combination of hot weather and lack of rainfall is having an impact on their farming operations, particular those without irrigation. It certainly has affected the corn crop and will impact peanuts and soybeans if we do not get rain soon."

According to Hope Mizzell, SC State Climatologist, "Rainfall totals within each county are highly variable, for example in York County some areas are reporting less than 2" since June 1 while others have received over 7". Since our last Drought Committee meeting in mid-June, rainfall totals have decreased statewide. The drought impacts have been intensified due to the much above normal temperatures."

Select National Weather Service Cooperative Network rainfall totals and departure from normal values for the period June 15 – July 15 are provided below:

June 15-July 15, 2015 Rainfall Totals and Percent of Normal Values

STATION NAME	RAINFALL (Inches)	% OF NORMAL	STATION NAME	RAINFALL (Inches)	% OF NORMAL
Winnsboro	0.58	14	Wateree Dam	2.71	62
Greenville	0.89	21	Walterboro 1 SW	3.94	72
Santuck	0.96	23	Columbia Metro	4.01	73
Chester 1 SE	1.39	31	Bamberg	4.02	74
Cleveland 3S	1.66	32	Anderson	2.60	75
Pickens	1.45	33	Jocassee 8 WNW	5.37	77
Johnston 4SW	1.57	35	Sumter	4.43	77
Newberry	1.62	37	Charleston AFB	4.88	78

Cheraw	2.32	44	Manning	4.10	78
Orangeburg 2	2.65	51	Florence	3.81	78
Andrews	2.74	52	Marion	4.91	94
Caesars Head	3.79	57	Walhalla	5.49	122

Drought Response Committee Chairman Ken Rentiers stated, "The Committee will continue to monitor the situation closely and if conditions deteriorate the S.C. Department of Natural Resources will reconvene the committee as needed."

Drought Status Table

Current Drought Status by County				
Normal	Incipient	Moderate	Severe	Extreme
County Status	County Status	County Status	County Status	County Status
ABBEVILLE Incipient	AIKEN Moderate	ALLENDALE Moderate	ANDERSON Incipient	BAMBERG Moderate
BARNWELL Moderate	BEAUFORT Incipient	BERKELEY Moderate	CALHOUN Moderate	CHARLESTON Moderate
CHEROKEE Incipient	CHESTER Moderate	CHESTERFIELD Moderate	CLARENDON Moderate	COLLETON Moderate
DARLINGTON Moderate	DILLON Moderate	DORCHESTER Moderate	EDGEFIELD Incipient	FAIRFIELD Moderate
FLORENCE Moderate	GEORGETOWN Moderate	GREENVILLE Incipient	GREENWOOD Incipient	HAMPTON Moderate
HORRY Moderate	JASPER Incipient	KERSHAW Moderate	LANCASTER Moderate	LAURENS Incipient
LEE Moderate	LEXINGTON Incipient	MARION Moderate	MARLBORO Moderate	MCCORMICK Incipient
NEWBERRY Incipient	OCONEE Incipient	ORANGEBURG Moderate	PICKENS Incipient	RICHLAND Incipient
SALUDA Incipient	SPARTANBURG Incipient	SUMTER Moderate	UNION Incipient	WILLIAMSBURG Moderate
YORK Moderate				