

TO: City Council Work Session  
FROM: Carrie Gillum, Senior Water Resources Specialist  
DATE: August 18, 2026  
SUBJECT: 2026 Drought Briefing and Public Outreach

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1) Recommended Action:

No action requested, this is informational only.

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2) Background:

Each year, the Water Resources & Sustainability Department (WRS) completes a drought assessment for the city. The assessment reviews local conditions using state and national climate datasets to forecast drought severity during the peak water demand season (generally July 1–September 15). This summer, models again indicate above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall for our region. The Washington Department of Ecology has also issued a statewide drought declaration for the fourth year in a row.

Beginning in May of each year, WRS monitors daily water production and consumption to evaluate triggers that can escalate city response actions through our four-stage Water Shortage Response Plan (WSRP). As in most prior years, WRS recommends implementing Stage 1, the lowest stage, and will continue monitoring conditions.

Staff will provide an overview of current conditions and ongoing monitoring, WSRP stages, and outreach efforts to promote voluntary reductions in water consumption by the public. Voluntary conservation by Tumwater's customers decreases the likelihood of triggering higher stages of the WSRP.

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3) Policy Support:

- City of Tumwater Water Shortage Response Plan – 2019 Update
  - WAC 246-290-100 (Water System Plan)
  - Tumwater Municipal Code, 13.04.170
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4) Alternatives:

☐ None, no action required

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5) Fiscal Notes:

None, no action required.

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6) Attachments:

- A. 2026 Drought Assessment Memo
- B. 2019 Water Shortage Response Plan