

# Water Shortage Response Plan

## Drought Stage 1 Update

May 20, 2026



**UNIONCOUNTY**  
WATER

# Situation Overview

- Extremely dry conditions have been building over the past 6 months.
- Catawba Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group (CW-DMAG) has declared Stage 1 Drought on April 16<sup>th</sup> based on the triggers in the Low Inflow Protocol (LIP).
- As a member of the CW-DMAG, Union County is required to implement its Incipient Drought Phase / CW DMAG Stage 1 Plan.
- Goal during Stage 1 is to achieve a reduction of 3-5% in overall water use.
- No new mandatory restrictions for residential customers.
- Voluntary conservation is encouraged to extend the water supply for the entire basin.

# Situation Overview

## Low Inflow Protocol Triggers

Catawba-Wateree LIP Trigger Status Summary for 04/13/26  
and Changes Compared to 02/16/26

	Reservoir Storage as % of Target	% of 6-Month Long-Term Avg Streamflow	3-Month Avg of US Drought Monitor	C- W Groundwater Network (% of Historic Range) <i>For Informational Use Only</i>
Normal	>=100%	>85%	<0	
LIP Stage 0	>90%	<=85%	>=0	→
LIP Stage 1	↓ 84.7% >75%	<=78%	↓ 1.96 >=1	
LIP Stage 2	>57%	<=65%	>=2	
LIP Stage 3	>42%	↓ 45.1% >55%	>=3	
LIP Stage 4	<=42%	<=62%	4	

↓ Apr 13, 2026

# Regulatory Framework Background

- The CW-DMAG and the LIP resulted from Duke Energy's relicensing process for the Catawba-Wateree Hydroelectric Project.
- The LIP is part of Duke Energy's federal operating license issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).
- The goal of the LIP is to delay the point at which the available water storage inventory is fully depleted.
- All Large Water Intake Owners (defined as >1 million gallons per day) are required to comply with LIP within 14 days.
- CW-DMAG members include:
  - Large Water Intake Owners located on the main stem of the Catawba River (Charlotte Water, Gastonia, Chester, LCWSD, Union County, Salisbury, Mooresville, Hickory, etc.)
  - Owners of Large Water Intake structures located on any tributary stream within the basin that ultimately drains to Lake Wateree
  - North Carolina Departments (Department of Environmental Quality, Wildlife Resources Commission)
  - South Carolina Departments (Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Services)
  - Federal Agencies (United States Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service)
  - Duke Energy
- Union County's Water Shortage Response Plan complies with CW-DMAG and LIP requirements.

# Required Actions

- Union County to declare Stage 1 drought status on April 21<sup>st</sup>
- Update UC website and social media
- Notify UC employees via email
- Send bill inserts to customers

# Additional Actions

- Issue press release
- Prepare for potential Stage 2 declaration in May

# Restrictions – Stage 1

- All Stage 0 mandatory restrictions.
  - Limit spray irrigation to 3 days per week, assigned days.
- No transport of water from within the County to outside of the County where such water has been drawn by tanker truck from a hydrant of the County water utility system.
  - Exception for fire protection and Bona Fide Farm Uses.
- Voluntary conservation encouraged, including limit spray irrigation to 2 days per week.

# Timeline

- CW-DMAG members are updated twice per month on LIP status.
- Next update will be on May 1.
- Anticipating that without significant rainfall, Stage 2 may be declared.
- Stage 2 includes more severe mandatory restrictions including limiting irrigation to 2 days per week.
- Union County's Stage 2 includes higher rates for Tiers 4 and 5, non-residential, agriculture, and industrial water rates.
- If LIP declares Stage 2, UCW will give presentation at May 18<sup>th</sup> BOCC meeting.