



PRESS RELEASE

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Financial Assistance Available for Low-Income Residential Well Owners Impacted by Drought, Other Natural Disasters

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) announces a new program to provide short-term relief and financial assistance for low-income residential well owners experiencing irreversible deterioration of water supply quantity or water quality caused by droughts or other types of natural disasters. The Water Assistance for Natural Disaster Impacts to Low-Income Residential Well Owners (WAND) program is funded by a \$500,000 grant from the Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund (DWGTF).

“Through our Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund, NH has invested nearly \$2 million to provide assistance to scores of low-income homeowners whose wells have been affected by drought,” said Governor Chris Sununu. “With the expansion of this innovative program, NH is providing yet another layer of assistance to further ensure families have access to a source of clean, reliable drinking water.”

As of August 4, 2022 most of the state is in moderate drought with an area in the southeastern part of the state now in severe drought. Further, groundwater levels continue to drop in the southeast and Connecticut Valley. Due to these indicators of drought, NHDES anticipates that vulnerable private residential wells will be adversely

impacted and has started accepting applications into the WAND program for drought-related water quantity issues. Applications are available on the **DWGTF website**.

In general, projects that restore the homeowner with a reliable and safe source of drinking water are eligible in this program, subject to review and approval by NHDES. This may include, if feasible, connecting the homeowner to a nearby existing community water system, rehabilitation of the well, or replacing the well. Additionally, recognizing that each well has unique water quality characteristics and challenges, capital costs to install treatment may be included as an eligible project cost.

The WAND program may also provide immediate short-term relief with a delivery of bottled water where available or financial assistance to purchase bottled water, if requested while residents are waiting for their well improvement project to be completed. The bottled water provision will terminate upon completion of the water supply well project; if the applicant is determined to be ineligible for financial assistance; or, at the discretion of NHDES.

To prove eligibility, applicants must demonstrate their low-income status and that a drought, natural disaster or extreme weather event as determined by NHDES has adversely affected the supply or quality of water from their private well. The affected well must be associated with the eligible applicant's primary residence that they own, and the issue must be verified by a licensed New Hampshire water well contractor and/or pump installer. Low-income eligibility and the amount of financial assistance available is determined based on family size and total household income. Information on the **eligibility criteria** can be found on the DWGTF website and private well owners are encouraged to self-screen using these tables.

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