

# DROUGHT BILL

An Act relative to maintaining adequate water supplies through effective drought management

Sponsored by Rep. Joan Meschino, Sen. Jamie Eldridge (H.861, S.475)

**With climate change, droughts are becoming more frequent, long-lasting, and severe.**

THIS PUTS OUR RIVER AND ALL WHO CALL IT HOME IN DANGER—droughts destroy important wildlife habitat, degrade water quality, and put drinking water sources at risk for communities who rely on well water.

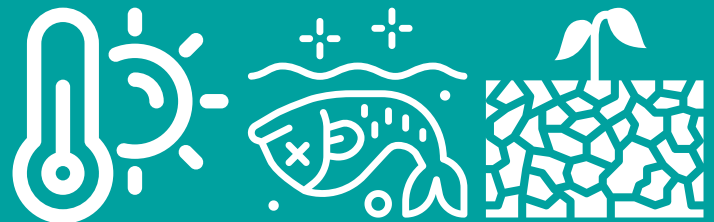
YET, WHEN DROUGHT HITS, IT'S UP TO INDIVIDUAL CITIES & TOWNS TO IMPLEMENT WATER CONSERVATION REQUIREMENTS, resulting in a patchwork approach where some municipalities have strict requirements, and others none at all, while depleting the same struggling rivers.

**We need rapid, coordinated response to severe drought.**

QUESTIONS? Contact Zeus Smith [zsmith@crwa.org](mailto:zsmith@crwa.org)

In 2016, our watershed experienced the most significant drought since the 1960s with record low water levels and groundwater levels. Then again in 2020. And now, in 2022.

DROUGHT HAS DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES for the river ecosystem, wildlife, and all of us who depend on healthy rivers for drinking water, recreation, and enjoyment.



**In July 2022, a severe flash drought caused sections of the Charles River to run dry.**

THAT'S WHERE THE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT BILL COMES IN. This bill would help protect our rivers from the devastating impacts of drought by...

- empowering the Executive Office of Energy and Affairs (EEA) to require regional water conservation measures during a declared drought for all non-essential outdoor watering to protect public health, safety, and the environment.
- establishing the Drought Management Task Force as the authority for declaring drought severity, determining appropriate water conservation measures, and recommending EEA implement them.

**LET'S PROTECT OUR RIVERS, TOGETHER. SUPPORT THE DROUGHT BILL.**



# what does drought look like in the charles river watershed?



NEEDHAM

2021



2022

WATERTOWN DAM

## A DISAPPEARING CHARLES RIVER.

### In 2022, many sections of the Charles River ran dry...

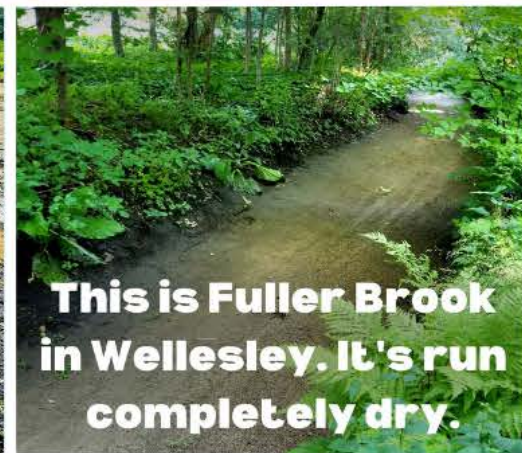
THE FIVE LOWEST DEPTHS RECORDED IN JULY 2022:



Data source: CRWA Volunteer Monthly Monitoring Program, 2022



DEDHAM

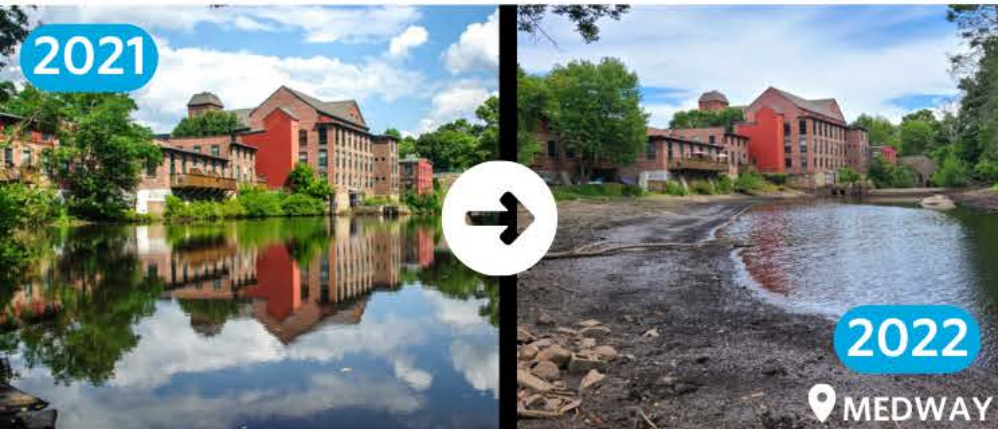


This is Fuller Brook in Wellesley. It's run completely dry.



MILLENNIUM PARK, WEST ROXBURY

2021



2022

MEDWAY

Drought has devastating consequences for our river & all who call it home. YET, THERE ARE NO REGIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR WATER CONSERVATION IN TIMES OF DROUGHT!

WE NEED STATEWIDE, COORDINATED DROUGHT RESPONSE TO PROTECT OUR RIVERS.

LET'S PASS THE DROUGHT BILL NOW!

learn more > [crwa.org/drought](http://crwa.org/drought)



# HOW DROUGHT IMPACTS THE CHARLES RIVER...

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IN 2022, OUR WATERSHED FACED SEVERE, PROLONGED DROUGHT & EXTREME HEAT:

- In July, three sections of the Charles River measured less than half a foot deep.
- Several major tributaries dried up completely.
- In August, the Boston area recorded the hottest 30-day stretch in history!
- In July, Logan Airport measured under half an inch of rain, the lowest in twenty years.



## DROUGHT DEGRADES THE RIVER ECOSYSTEM

Severe drought harms aquatic life, degrades water quality, raises water temperatures, destroys wildlife habitat and connectivity, threatens biodiversity, and puts all the flora and fauna who rely on cool, clean water in danger.



## DROUGHT THREATENS AGRICULTURE & ECONOMY

Drought puts our food system and property at risk. Lack of rain devastates small local farms that produce our vegetables, meat, honey, flowers, and herbs. Drought threatens our very foundations—when groundwater levels drop, pilings supporting areas of Boston decay and fail, and could compromise \$36 billion in properties.



## DROUGHT RISKS PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Long-lasting drought threatens our drinking water supplies, increases wildfire risk, kills public shade trees that cool our neighborhoods, and takes away the lakes, ponds, and streams for recreation, putting our most vulnerable neighbors—children, the elderly, outdoor workers, and those with health conditions—at risk.

**AS DROUGHTS BECOME MORE FREQUENT, LONG-LASTING, AND SEVERE, LET'S CREATE A LIVABLE FUTURE BY PASSING THE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT BILL!**