



Delaware River Basin Commission Proposes Making Big Water Systems Report Their Largest Customers' Use for Drought and Reservoir Planning; Virtual Hearing November 4, Comments Due December 4

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The four-state and federal Delaware River Basin Commission wants public water suppliers that withdraw 100,000 gallons a day or more to report monthly use by each customer taking 50,000 gallons a day or more. It says the data would sharpen drought and reservoir planning. A Zoom hearing is November 4; written comments close December 4.

The Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) has proposed changing its Water Code and Comprehensive Plan so public water systems must report how much water their largest customers use. The notice of proposed rulemaking was published in the Federal Register on October 6, 2026.

DRBC manages the water of the Delaware River Basin across Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. Its members are the four governors and the Division Engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers North Atlantic Division, who represents the United States.

What would change

- Each water system serving the public that withdraws 100,000 gallons per day or more (as a 30-day average) would report data for every customer it supplies 50,000 gallons per day or more.
- The report would include the customer's monthly use for each of 12 months, its type or sector, and its NAICS industry code. Customers would be identified by the utility's own account ID number.

- Reporting would start with calendar year 2026 data, due in June 2027. Less-than-monthly billing data would be accepted for months before the rule takes effect.
- DRBC says the rule is meant to avoid making utilities send the same data to both DRBC and state agencies.

Why DRBC says it needs the data

- About 300 public water systems in the Basin already report source and service-area data to state agencies.
- Excluding out-of-basin diversions, public water suppliers made up about 15 percent (833 million gallons a day) of total water use in 2024 and 28.5 percent (83 mgd) of consumptive use.
- For decades DRBC has assumed 10 percent of water withdrawn by most public suppliers is consumed. It wants data to test that number.
- The commission says better data would help it judge whether drought management and contingency plans, including releases from reservoirs, will be enough in the future.

How to be heard

- Public hearing: Wednesday, November 4, 2026, 1:30–3:00 p.m. ET by Zoom. Register through drbc.gov by 5 p.m. the day before.
- Written comments: through 5 p.m. ET Friday, December 4, 2026, using DRBC's online comment system linked at drbc.gov. Mail-in exceptions: Commission Secretary, DRBC, P.O. Box 7360, West Trenton, NJ 08628.
- Contacts: Kate Schmidt, 609-477-7205 (hearing and comments), and Chad Pindar, 609-477-7248 (substance).

Source

- Federal Register, FR Doc. 2026-20480, Delaware River Basin Commission, "Basin Regulations; Water Code," notice of proposed rulemaking and public hearing, October 6, 2026 ([federalregister.gov](https://www.federalregister.gov)).

Notes

- Image: Aerial view of the Delaware Water Gap on the Delaware River (file photo). Photo: Quintin Soloviev via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY 4.0).
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