



## **We need greater resilience in our water supply**

Irish Water have reported the ‘increasing likelihood’ of a Water Conservation Order (hosepipe ban) being implemented owing to the shortage in water supply caused by increased demand in the hot weather and extra hygiene necessary for protection against the Corona virus.

Met Eireann records show that we have had 37 dry spells (15 consecutive days with less than 1.0mm rain) in the past two months, data for over 30 years show that we would normally only have about 37 dry spells over the course of a year in Ireland. This has happened at a time when the need for extra hygiene to combat COVID-19 has resulted in approximately 20% greater demand for water.

Extended dry weather and continued demand will result in lower water levels in river and lakes which are the source of public drinking water supply for over 80% of the Irish population. With lower water levels means there is less water to dilute pollutants so discharges to rivers and lakes can cause deterioration in water quality with resulting impact on flora and fauna. Low water levels impact on recharge rates to groundwater sources and this can impact on water supply to small private supplies.

The Irish climate is projected to warm across all seasons, and it is expected this will be accompanied by an amplified precipitation regime, characterised by wetter winters and drier summers, respectively. We have evidence of extreme flooding in recent years and our first Water Conservation order ever was issued in 2018.

Commenting on this situation, Dr. Tom Collins, Chair of The Water Forum, stated that *“the Forum has consistently drawn attention to the lack of resilience in our water services particularly in Dublin. It is extremely unfortunate that we are once again facing into a water scarcity particularly in these very challenging times, he said. Climate change and our own experience show that a flooding problem in January can swing to a drought in June. A more integrated approach to managing such extreme events is now required”*.

An Fóram Uisce|The Water Forum welcomes the fact that Irish Water is currently preparing a first National Water Resources Plan that aims to ensure a sustainable, secure and reliable water supply for the next 25 years. It is expected the plan will assess the amount of water available in our rivers, lakes and groundwater systems and calculate the demand from businesses, industry and homes. Assessing the likely impact of climate change on the geographic distribution of water resources will also be very important. Irish Water state that this draft Plan will be available for public consultation and An Fóram encourages the urgent delivery of this plan.

Water is a fragile resource, vital for our health and wellbeing and for our economy. An Fóram Uisce|The Water Forum would recommend that everyone follow [Irish Water](#) and the National Federation of Group Water Schemes ([NFGWS](#)) advice on how to conserve water in drought conditions.

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**Note to editors**

An Fóram Uisce| The Water Forum was established as a statutory body in June 2018 to facilitate stakeholder engagement and debate on issues relating to water as a resource, water quality, rural water concerns, issues affecting customers of Irish Water and issues associated with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

The Forum consists of 27 representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connections to issues relating to water quality. These include consumer, community and water sports groups, business and trade unions, environmental sector, Irish Water consumers, the group water scheme sector and a range of other sectors including education, agriculture, fisheries and forestry. The Forum is chaired by Dr Tom Collins.

[www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)

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Links:

<https://nfgws.ie/nfgws-encourage-members-to-conserve-water/>

[www.water.ie/conserve](http://www.water.ie/conserve)

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