EPA WaterSense

New Jersey Water Fact Sheet

Location. Location. Location. It's New Jersey's greatest asset—from the sandy beaches of the Jersey Shore to the bright lights of Atlantic City. Close proximity to New York City and Philadelphia also make New Jersey the state with the highest population density in the United States. Though generally considered a "water rich" state with an average rainfall of 45 inches per year, New Jersey faces long-term water issues as its population continues to grow—while water supplies remain constant.

Static Supply

New Jersey's average annual precipitation ranges from about 40 inches along the southeast coast to 51 inches in the north-central part of the state. Many areas average between 43 and 47 inches, and there are currently no active drought conditions in the state.

Groundwater and surface water supplies are used equally by residents. An increased need for groundwater withdrawals in southern New Jersey, due to population growth and the presence of more productive Coastal Plain aquifers, have increased the risk of saltwater intrusion, which can threaten the usable supply.

The average New Jersey resident uses 70 gallons of water per day. However, in peak water use months—April to October—this number can increase to up to 155 gallons per day.

Growing Demand

Although the industrial revolution and iron mining from the mid-1800s to 1900s steadily increased New Jersey's population, it was not until the New Jersey Turnpike opened in 1950 that the population truly boomed, resulting in a 25 percent increase in one decade. With every county in the state considered by the U.S. Census Bureau to be "metropolitan"—the only U.S. state with this claim—New Jersey's population density is more than 1,000 people per square mile.

The Census Bureau projects the state's population will increase by nearly 1 million people by 2020. This population growth in New Jersey will place additional demand on the state's water resources and infrastructure, particularly in areas that have not experienced high water demand before.

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Looking to the Future

In addition to population growth straining water supplies, a recent National Resources Defense Council report states seven counties in New Jersey should expect high to extremely high risks for water shortages by 2050 as a result of climate change.

As New Jersey's water demands increase, conservation programs and water efficiency have become the state's main focus for addressing water quantity issues. New Jersey has developed progressive monitoring, assessment, and management programs in the country and ranks among the top five states in the nation for its programs dealing with environmental issues.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Division of Water Resources, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Region 2 office, developed the New Jersey Water Savers Program in 2007. The program encourages the community and local stakeholders to take on water-saving behaviors, saving taxpayers money in the long term by delaying or eliminating the need for new or expanded water infrastructure. The program includes indoor plumbing retrofits, outdoor water-saving demonstrations, and incentive programs.

EPA's WaterSense® program has several partners throughout the state helping to spread the word about water efficiency. These partners encourage customers to look for the WaterSense label on plumbing products that have been independently certified to use at least 20 percent less water and perform as well as or better than standard models.

Saving water can also save energy and money. For example, if every household in New Jersey replaced its inefficient showerheads with WaterSense labeled ones, it could save 7.6 billion gallons of water each year—that's enough to supply the daily water needs of every household in Newark, New Jersey. It would also save about $70 million in energy costs from heating, treating, and distributing less water.

For more information and water-saving tips, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

Sustainable New Jersey

A coalition of state agencies, local government organizations, academic institutions and others are implementing Sustainable Jersey™ , a certification program for municipalities in New Jersey that want to go green, save money, and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long term. Municipalities can earn points by taking actions in several areas including energy efficiency, green design, land use, and natural resources. The voluntary program, which launched in early 2009, has certified 34 communities to date.

Recognizing the importance that water plays in sustaining a community, two of the actions are focused on water efficiency. Points can be earned by developing water conservation education programs that inform individuals of the need to use water resources in a sustainable manner. Development of a water conservation ordinance, based on a model provided by DEP, is one of several priority actions that communities must select in order to receive recognition. Visit www.sustainablejersey.com to learn more.