

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND NATURAL RESOURCES WALES
WATER RESOURCES ACT 1991
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A RIVER SEVERN DROUGHT ORDER

TAKE NOTICE that due to the threat of a serious deficiency in flows/levels in the River Severn catchment which poses a serious threat to the flora or fauna which are dependent on those waters, the Environment Agency (“the Agency”) in relation to England are applying to the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and Natural Resources Wales in relation to Wales, are applying to Welsh Government, for a drought order under Section 73 of the Water Resources Act 1991. The deficiency is caused by an exceptional shortage of rain.

The proposed drought order, which is intended to apply for up to 6 months, aims to maintain supported water resources along the whole River Severn for longer at lower quantities, rather than risk running out of supported water and causing significant and sudden river level/flow declines that would stress ecology and impact migratory fish. The River Severn is artificially supported by reservoir and groundwater releases most years, known as ‘River Severn Regulation.’ This year has needed large and continuous releases to maintain a healthy river. This has lowered water levels in Llyn Clywedog Reservoir at the head of the River Severn in Wales to drought action triggers, a level which needs changes in operations via a drought order to conserve water.

The River Severn Drought Order proposal includes:

- capping the maximum release from Llyn Clywedog reservoir at 300 megalitres per day (MI/d);
- reducing the prescribed flow at Bewdley from a single daily mean of 727 MI/d and 850 MI/d averaged over 5 days to a target of 730 MI/d averaged over 5 days;
- reducing the prescribed flow at Bewdley below the target flow of 730 MI/d averaged over 5 days if River Severn Regulation releases can no longer achieve it;
- imposing a 5% reduction on water company licensed abstractions on the River Severn;
- imposing a 300 MI/d abstraction cap on the Gloucester Docks abstraction for the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal in England, when flows at Deerhurst or Haw Bridge gauge are below 1,200 MI/d;
- capping releases from Llyn Clywedog reservoir to 1.5% of remaining storage if storage in Llyn Clywedog reservoir falls below the ‘emergency storage’ trigger.

The anticipated effect of the drought order if granted, will lower flows and water levels along the River Severn to conserve water in Llyn Clywedog reservoir. Conserving water will allow releases to continue for longer to protect migratory fish and ecology during the worst of the drought and ensure the reservoir can refill more quickly to provide better protection in subsequent dry years. Without the drought order, releases from Llyn Clywedog reservoir are at risk of stopping and sections of the upper Severn could be at risk of drying out, resulting in the whole river experiencing record minimum flows and environmental stress.

The impacts from operating the River Severn Drought Order are predicted to be temporary and once normal rainfall returns, the environment should improve naturally and recover within one to three years. This is consistent with the expected natural drought recovery period.

Anyone may inspect the proposals, which include a map of the area affected by the order, until 25 August 2026. Inspection is free of charge and available during normal working hours by appointment at:-

Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales offices:

- Natural Resources Wales, Powells Place, Powells Lane, Welshpool, Powys SY21 7JY (Office hours Mon to Fri 9:00-17:00). To arrange an appointment at this office, please contact Customer Hub Enquiries team on 0300 065 3000 or enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk
- Environment Agency, Hafren House, Welshpool Road, Shelton, Shrewsbury SY3 8BB (Office hours Mon to Fri 9:00-17:00).
- Environment Agency, Mance House, Arthur Drive, Kidderminster, DY11 7RA (Office hours Mon to Fri 9:00-17:00).
- Environment Agency, Riversmeet House, Newtown Industrial Estate, Northway Lane, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8JG (Office hours Mon to Fri 9:00-17:00).
- To arrange an appointment at an Environment Agency office please contact 03708 506 506 or enquiries_westmids@environment-agency.gov.uk

Local library:

- Llanidloes Library, 6 Great Oak St, Llanidloes SY18 6BN
llanidloes.library@powys.gov.uk (opening Hours Monday 10am-1pm, Wednesday 10am-1pm and 2pm-6pm, Friday 10am-1pm and 2pm-4pm, Saturday 9:30am-1pm)

You can view the application and supporting documents online at:

<https://ymgyngghori.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/permitting-caniatau/river-severn-drought-order>

Objections must be sent to both Defra and Welsh government via email or in writing:

water.resources@defra.gov.uk and waterEPC@gov.wales

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, c/o Water Resources Policy, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Seacole 3rd Floor, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

Water Branch, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Objections should be made immediately and in any event to be received no later than 5pm on 25 August 2026. The response should outline if you are making a formal objection to the proposal and the grounds for the objection.

Dated 17 August 2026

Grace Wight, West Midlands Environment, Planning & Engagement Manager,
Environment Agency, Mance House, Arthur Drive, Kidderminster, DY11 7RA

Huwel Manley, Acting Executive Director, Place Operations, Natural Resources Wales,
Welsh Government Offices, Cathays Park, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ