



To: Mayor and Town Council Members

From: Mark C. Meyers, Town Manager

Date: August 6, 2026

Subject: Water Shortage Contingency Plan

Background

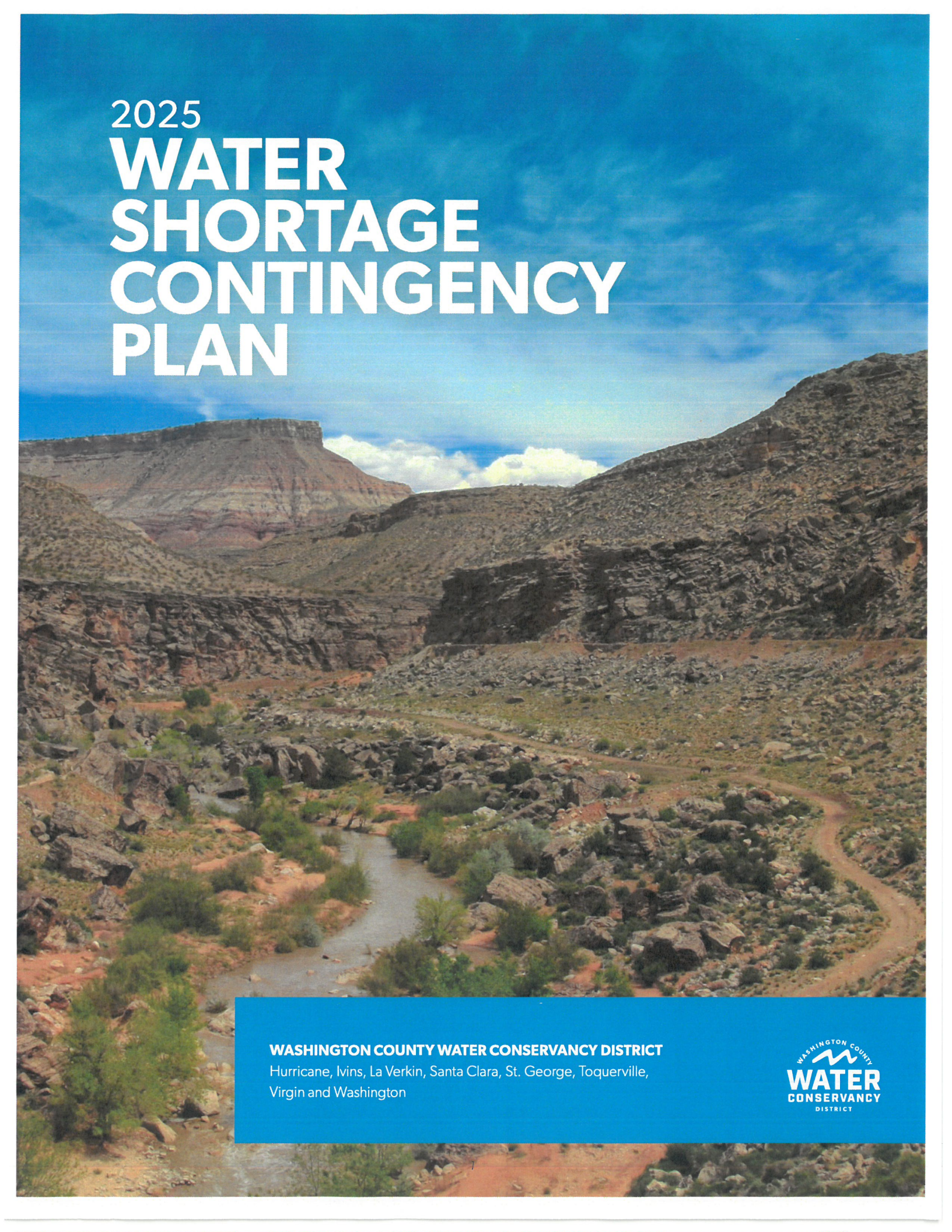
Last year the Washington County Water Conservancy District developed a Water Shortage Contingency Plan, which was adopted by the Town Council (see attached executive summary). The plan provides a system for prioritizing drinking water under diminished supply. It includes mitigation measures, drought monitoring, identification of shortage stages, response actions, a vulnerability assessment, operational framework, and an update process.

If the District declares a shortage condition, water budgets will be issued to municipalities based on the shortage response target (e.g., -10% to -60% use). Importantly, member municipalities will be responsible for initiating a response plan to ensure operation within the water budget (and avoid a financial penalty). And the District is now requesting that municipalities adopt water contingency plans to use as guides to address shortage conditions.

To that end, attached is a draft local Water Shortage Contingency Plan. The plan uses the District's guidance found in the overall plan, verbatim, which will ensure consistent action and language should implementing the plan become necessary. District staff recently met with Town DPW staff to discuss and review the plan.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Town Council review the Water Shortage Contingency Plan and consider formally adopting it. The plan will provide local guidance if/when the Washington County Water Conservancy District Board of Trustees declares a shortage condition.



2025 WATER SHORTAGE CONTINGENCY PLAN

WASHINGTON COUNTY WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Hurricane, Ivins, La Verkin, Santa Clara, St. George, Toquerville,
Virgin and Washington



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As one of Utah's hottest and driest regions, and one of the nation's fastest growing metropolitan areas, Washington County is vulnerable to impacts of reduced water supply and shortage. To prepare for emergency water shortage conditions, the Washington County Water Conservancy District (district) developed this Water Shortage Contingency Plan (plan). The plan was developed in partnership with its municipal partners to provide a collaborative system for prioritizing drinking water under circumstances of diminishing supply. The district's municipal partners are the cities of St. George, Washington, Hurricane, Santa Clara, Ivins, Toquerville, La Verkin, and the town of Virgin.

An established task force (Appendix A) guided and informed the planning process. In addition, guidance was sought from more than 60 elected officials and technical experts through a survey instrument. The plan includes mitigation measures, drought monitoring, identification of shortage stages, response actions, a vulnerability assessment, operational framework, and an update process.

While drought is an ever-present threat in the region, other circumstances can result in water shortages; earthquakes, power interruptions or necessary infrastructure repairs can interfere with the ability to deliver water. The measures in this plan may be used to curtail demand in any scenario that diminishes the supply or distribution of water.

Vulnerability Assessment

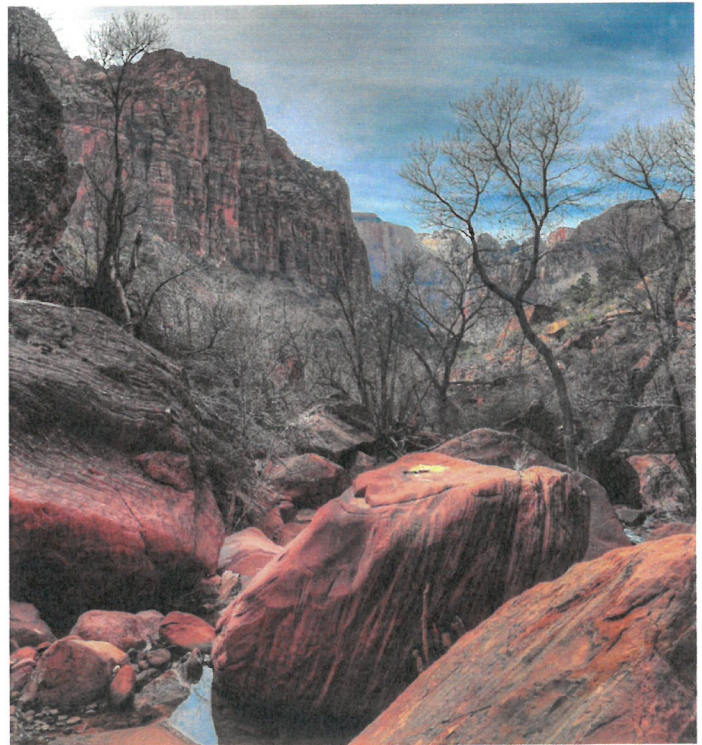
This assessment identifies areas of vulnerability in existing facilities, system capabilities, and water practices of the district and its customers. Additionally, the vulnerability assessment factors in climate, Utah state policy, supply, demand, and climate change.

Mitigation Measures

The district and municipal partners have invested more than \$70 million in conservation measures and programs to reduce water demand, successfully reducing per capita usage by nearly 50% from the year 2000. The county's ongoing conservation efforts serve to increase shortage resiliency and mitigate impacts of water supply issues.

Drought Monitoring

The district developed a drought monitoring tool for identifying drought and assessing drought severity. The tool processes historical and current data to classify water supply conditions into five categories of increasing drought severity. The tool will be used to inform decision-makers as they consider the potential necessity of declaring a water shortage condition.



Virgin Town, Utah

Water Shortage Contingency Plan

1. Purpose

To ensure the continued availability of safe drinking water during periods of drought, infrastructure limitations, or emergency disruption by establishing clear conservation stages, enforcement actions, and alternative supply strategies.

2. Water System Overview (Context)

The Town of Virgin relies primarily on:

- Water run-off from snowpack and precipitation from the surrounding watershed into the Virgin River
- Seasonal flows influenced by the Virgin River basin
- Regional coordination with Washington County Water Conservancy District
- Demand influenced by nearby tourism and proximity to in greater Zion

3. Trigger Conditions (When Plan Activates)

Stage 0 – Conserve

- Implement Conservation Plan

Stage 1 – Caution

- Promote Stage 1 watering guidelines
- Reduce irrigation of public facilities by 10%
- Implement Stage 1 water rate structure
- Stage 0 actions Plus:
 - Leverage smart metering systems to strengthen messaging
 - Prevent lawn installations May through September
 - Limit residential swimming pool permits to 500 square feet or less surface area
 - Reject new connections for non-critical facilities with demands over 9 MGY
 - Increase enforcement of municipal water waste policies

Stage 2 – Concern

- Deploy Stage 2 communications
- Promote Stage 2 watering guidelines
- Reduce irrigation of public facilities by 20%
- Implement Stage 2 rate structure
- Stage 1 actions plus:
 - Defer new grass installation. Drip irrigated, water-efficient plants only
 - Prohibit irrigation of ornamental lawns in all sectors
 - Defer new private swimming pool permits
 - Require new housing to meet ultra efficient water standard
 - Reduce operation of public splash pads

- Reject new connections for non-critical facilities with demands over 3 MGY
- Restrict car washing frequency
- Prohibit ornamental fountain operation
- Prohibit comfort mist cooling systems
- Implement golf water budgets for 20% reduction
- Increase incentives for water efficient landscape 50%

Stage 3 – Alarm

- Deploy Stage 3 communications
- Promote Stage 3 watering guidelines
- Reduce irrigation of public facilities by 30%
- Implement Stage 3 rate structure
- Turn off outdoor water features, including splashpads
- Stage 2 actions plus:
 - Spray irrigation prohibited except for communal active recreation areas
 - Watering limited to drip irrigation or hand-held hose with positive shut-off nozzle
 - Implement water budgets for golf courses to reduce demand 30%
 - Planting only allowed for conversion of lawn areas to water-efficient landscape
 - No new connections approved except critical facilities or low-water demand facilities
 - Swimming pools covered when not in use. Only make up water allowed
 - Recreational water parks and splashpad operations suspended

Stage 4 – Crisis

- Deploy Stage 4 communications
- Deploy Stage 4 watering guidelines
- Reduce irrigation of public facilities by an additional 20% (60% total)
- Implement Stage 4 rate structure
- Golf course irrigation budgeted at 60% reduction
- Stage 3 actions plus:
 - Outdoor irrigation prohibited except communal active recreation areas which are budgeted at 40% of average.
 - All outdoor water recreation suspended
 - Car washing prohibited, except dry wash products

VIRGIN, UTAH
Resolution No. R2026-

**A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF VIRGIN TOWN, UTAH, ADOPTING THE
VIRGIN TOWN WATER SHORTAGE CONTINGENCY PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Town Council of Virgin Town recognizes the importance of protecting the Town's water supply and ensuring the continued availability of safe drinking water; and

WHEREAS, drought, changing water conditions, and emergency situations may require the Town to implement water conservation measures; and

WHEREAS, the Town has prepared a Water Shortage Contingency Plan pursuant to Washington County Water Conservancy's direction and guidance that establishes conservation stages and water use restrictions to help manage the Town's water resources during periods of shortage;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF VIRGIN, UTAH, THAT:.

1. The Virgin Town Water Shortage Contingency Plan, attached as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted as the official Water Shortage Contingency Plan for Virgin Town.
2. The Mayor, Town Manager, Public Works Director, Water Superintendent or their designee is authorized to implement the appropriate conservation stage identified in the Plan when conditions warrant and to take the actions necessary to carry out the Plan.
3. The Town Council may amend the Water Shortage Contingency Plan by resolution as needed.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Town Council of Virgin, Utah, this 18 Day of August, 2026.

By: _____
Jean Krause, Mayor

Attest: _____
Krystal Percival, Town Clerk/Recorder

<u>Vote</u>	<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Jean Krause, Mayor	☐	☐	☐
Paul Luwe, Council Member	☐	☐	☐
Valerie Wenz, Council Member	☐	☐	☐
April McKeon, Council Member	☐	☐	☐
Jim Kietzman, Council Member	☐	☐	☐

RECORDED this _____ day of _____ 2026

PUBLISHED or POSTED this _____ day of _____, 2026.

Resolution R2026-
Adopted: August 18, 2026

CERTIFICATE OF PASSAGE AND PUBLICATION OR POSTING

In accordance with Utah Code Annotated §63G-30-102 as amended, I, the Town Clerk/Recorder of Virgin, Utah, hereby certifies that the foregoing Ordinance was duly passed and published or posted via Class A Notice at:

- 1) Utah Public Notice website
- 2) Virgin Town website, www.virgin.utah.gov
- 3) Virgin Town Hall

Krystal Percival, Town Clerk/Recorder
Virgin Town, Utah