



# City of Cambridge

POR 2026-100  
**FIRST IN COUNCIL**  
May 11, 2026

COUNCILLOR NOLAN  
COUNCILLOR FLAHERTY  
COUNCILLOR ZUSY  
MAYOR SIDDIQUI

- WHEREAS: Much of the country is [experiencing serious drought conditions](#) which put a strain on governments at all levels, and cause financial, public health, and Climate risks; and
- WHEREAS: Cambridge has been in at least a Level 1, Mild Drought status since September 2025, including several months at a Level 2, Significant Drought, and all of March 2026 in a Level 3, [Critical Drought](#), which, as outlined in the [Massachusetts Drought Management Plan](#), require detailed monitoring of drought conditions, along with ongoing coordination among state and federal agencies to implement water use restrictions; and
- WHEREAS: The [U.S. Geological Survey](#) monitors and maintains water storage data for the Cambridge water supply, which is used by the Cambridge Water Department to monitor water levels at the Hobbs Brook Reservoir and Fresh Pond; and
- WHEREAS: Reservoir storage for all of the [year to date in 2026 is significantly lower than the median reservoir levels for the last 15 years](#), and if below-normal precipitation continues, the City of Cambridge may have to resort to purchasing water from MWRA to supplement or replace the City supply for an extended period of time, as in previous drought years, which is a significant expense; and
- WHEREAS: Despite the considerable snowfall that Cambridge and the greater region has had this winter, drought conditions persist due to limited groundwater recharge this winter, and with the higher water demand season approaching, it is critically important to be proactive with regards to water consumption and be vigilant in acting to conserve water; and
- WHEREAS: The City Council has asked the City administration for a comprehensive and effective response to drought conditions and to inform the general public, including public communication in all City outlets, including the Daily Update, and should focus particularly on outreach to large water users; and
- WHEREAS: Notwithstanding the need to conserve water, street trees, park trees, and trees on private property will need to continue to be maintained through regular irrigation as they provide essential public health and environmental justice benefits and are thus considered an essential use; and

- WHEREAS: The City Council wants the City to be prepared in the case of dry conditions continuing and to be prepared for late summer droughts; now therefore be it
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with relevant City departments to do extensive outreach to residents, businesses, and property owners to communicate the current water level status and take all measures to reduce nonessential water use citywide, and provide a report on citywide water usage and water supply; and be it further
- ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council in a timely manner.

In City Council May 11, 2026.  
Adopted by Affirmative  
Vote of Nine Members:-  
Attest:- Paula M. Crane, Interim City Clerk  
A true copy;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paula M. Crane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paula" being more prominent.

ATTEST:-

Paula M. Crane  
Interim City Clerk