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BRUCE FITZGERALD
DIRECTOR

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Re: Private Well Owners with Dry Wells

Residents in your municipality may call your office for direction on where to turn in the event of a dry well as a result of the drought conditions Maine is experiencing.

The U.S. Geological Survey reported that nearly the entire state is in some sort of hydrologic drought, with the southern two-thirds of the state showing surface water levels at the lowest ten percent of all data gathered over a period of 60-100 years. Groundwater levels for most of Maine are at the lowest 15 percent of all data gathered over the last 11-35 years.

The Maine Emergency Management Agency website advises the following:
(http://www.maine.gov/mema/prepare/prep_display.shtml?701117)

- Contact 2-1-1 to report your dry well. This will allow the state to see how widespread this problem is.
- Contact a well driller to discuss options. Options include well replacement, lowering an existing well pump deeper into the water table, or deepening the well itself. For informational guidance on licensed well drillers in Maine, see the Maine Well Driller's Commission.
- The following resources may be available to qualifying homeowners: Maine State Housing's Home Repair Program and USDA's Single Family Housing Loans and Grants.
- The Water Systems Council is a non-profit organization focused on private wells, and operates the wellcare Hotline, a free service that can answer questions on wells and well water.

Additionally, when responding to calls to our office we are suggesting residents contact their municipal General Assistance Officer regarding General Assistance that may be available under 22 M.R.S.A. § 4308: "A municipality may provide emergency assistance when the municipality determines that an emergency is imminent and that failure to provide assistance may result in undue hardship and unnecessary costs (22 M.R.S.A. § 4308(2))." We note two sections in the statute:

- "emergency" is defined as, "any life threatening situation or a situation beyond the control of the individual which, if not alleviated immediately, could reasonably be expected to pose a threat to the health or safety of a person(22 M.R.S.A.§ 4301(4))" and;
- a person who does not have sufficient resources to provide one or more basic necessities in an emergency is eligible for emergency general assistance, even when that applicant has been found ineligible for nonemergency general assistance because the applicant's income exceeds the municipalities standard of need (22 M.R.S.A.§ 4308(2)).