

Regular Press Briefing (220614)

The Ministry of Environment will ensure to provide residential and industrial water smoothly by preemptively managing dams

Briefed by Son Ok-ju, Director-General of the Water Resources Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Environment., on Tuesday, June 14, 2022, at 10:30 AM.

Hello, everyone. I am Son Ok-ju, Director-General of the Water Resources Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Environment.

The total number of dams managed by the Ministry of Environment is thirty-four. They are comprised of twenty multi-purpose dams, such as the Soyanggang dam and Cheongju dam, and fourteen dams solely devoted to providing usable water.

The water held in those dams is either similar to or slightly lower than average. We ensure that there will be no issues in providing water for residential and industrial use.

I will update you on the current precipitation and water storage situation.

Compared to the average rainfall of the previous year, the average rainfall of river basins where twenty multi-purpose dams are located was 55%, and the average rain around fourteen water dams was 53%,

The average amount of water held in the twenty multi-purpose dams and fourteen water dams was 101% and 74%, respectively, compared to the amount of water stored in those dams the previous year.

Those dams are managed relatively well against the current poor rainfall.

However, the two multi-purpose dams, the Boryeong dam and Hoengseong dam, and one water dam, the Unmun dam, have entered the drought phase. To this end, the Ministry of Environment is implementing countermeasures for dams with a drought warning level higher than 'Concern.' Even if the droughts worsen, we will take measures to ensure no issues in the provision of residential and industrial water take place.

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The Ministry of Environment formed a 'Water Supply Control Room' with the Flood Control office and the Korea Water Resources Corporation (K-water) to monitor the dams with a drought warning level of 'Alert' or higher daily. Since June 3, the Ministry of Environment has regularly inspected all dams

nationwide.

The following are the guidelines for drought response.

The Ministry of Environment preemptively adjusts the amount of water provided by dams based on their drought levels, which are 'Concern,' 'Caution,' 'Alert,' and 'Severe.'

Multi-purpose dams operate on a four-level system of 'Concern,' 'Caution,' 'Alert,' and 'Severe.' In contrast, water dams operate on a simplified three-level system of 'Concern,' 'Caution,' and 'Severe.'

Under the level-based response system, when the drought warning level becomes 'Concern,' the water would be provided only the amount it is actually necessary. Upon entering the 'Caution' level, the downstream's river maintenance flow can be reduced by up to 100%. When it enters the 'Alert' level, 20~30% of the actual amount of agricultural water may be reduced. Under the 'Severe' level, even residential and industrial water may be reduced by 20%. Despite these principles, we will consider each dam's specific circumstances if we implement such measures.

Let me update the responsive measures for each dam.

For the Boryeong Dam, which has already entered the 'Alert' level, we have reduced its river maintenance flow by 42%. We have been operating a waterway that brings water from the Geumgang River into the Boryeong Dam.

Secondly, for the Unmun Dam, which has entered the 'Severe' level, we are supplying under the conditions of its river maintenance flow reduced by 68%. Moreover, together with the Local Water Supply System of Daegu City, we provide water from the Nakdonggang River instead of the dam's water.

Even though the Unmun Dam is at a 'Severe' level, considering the water supplied through local waterworks, we do not implement as mentioned in the manual.

Even if the drought worsens, further decreasing the dam's stored water levels, there is a contingency plan. Under the worsening situation, we will run emergency facilities that can provide water from the Geumhogang River as an alternative. Therefore, we have determined that there would be no problems with residential and industrial water provisions.

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The Hoengseong Dam, which has entered the 'Concern' level, has reduced 100% of its river maintenance

flow as a responsive measure. If precipitation continues to be deficient, there is a possibility it may enter the 'Caution' level by the time August comes. Still, we expect it won't ever enter the 'Alert' level.

Suppose precipitation continues to be deficient for other reasons. In that case, we predict that the Soyonggang Dam·Chungju Dam of the Han River, the Milyang Dam around the Nakdonggang River, the Juan Dam·Sueo Dam of the Seomjingang River, the Pyeonglim Dam of the Youngsangang River, and so on, will enter the 'Concern' level sometime within the month. However, we will preemptively manage dams and implement responsive measures, so there are no residential and industrial water issues.

The following is the current situation regarding islands and mountainous regions. We have been delivering an Emergency Water Supply for islands and mountainous areas where residential water cannot be supplied from the multi-purpose dams. As of June 13, we transported water by trucks to 5,558 households and 11,916 people across ten municipalities.

In detail, we transport water to Jung-gu and Ongjin in Incheon; Jindo and Wando in Jeonnam; Bonghwa, Andong, and Pohang in Gyeongbuk; Inje and Jeongseon in Gangwon; and Chungju in Chungbuk. We will prevent any problems from drought by closely monitoring the regions most vulnerable to drought. We will implement emergency measures such as transporting water and providing water bottles when necessary.

Moreover, we will also implement a mid-to-long-term plan for regions vulnerable to drought, such as supplying local waterworks, building groundwater wells, and desalinating seawater.

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The following is on cooperation regarding agricultural water.

The Ministry of Environment provides most of the agricultural water allotted to dams managed by the Ministry as usual. In some cases, we supply additional agricultural water, considering how much water the dam stores.

At the Boryeong and Hoengseong dams, agricultural water is distributed as the amount allotted to those dams. The Ministry supplied the total amount of water allotted to the Unmun dam until May. However, the amount of water actually used was provided in June, considering the drought level.

There are some cases to supply additional agricultural water from Busaho, an agricultural watershed located downstream of the Boryeong Dam, to solve the water scarcity problem and salinity increase.

Additionally, the Ministry of Environment supplied additional water to restore the amount of water in the Dongbu reservoir of Gucheon dam, an agricultural watershed. There was also another case involving Namgang dam, located in Jinju. Water was additionally provided to secure industrial water for its downstream area. The Gucheon dam supplied 350,000 t, while the Namgang Dam supplied 100,000 t.

The following is a rainfall forecast.

According to the Korea Meteorological Administration's long-term prospects of precipitation amounts, until August, the amount is expected to be similar to that of the average year. Therefore, we anticipate that the precipitation amount will increase once we are headed closer to June 21 - September 20.

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Even if the flood season arrives, we plan to focus on securing the dams' water for the time being. We think that we do not need artificial water release, which empties the dam in advance to ensure flood control capacity.

In addition to the drought and response measures, we plan to strengthen monitoring to prevent flood damage caused by localized heavy rain, the rainy season, etc., while actively preparing for flood risks by strictly managing the dam's water levels.

It concludes today's press briefing.