



Drought Update Tuesday, May 26, 2015

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **State Water Board Approves Voluntary Cutback Program for Delta Riparian Water Rights:** On May 22, the State Water Board approved a program that allows riparian water rights holders in the Delta to [voluntarily cut back water use by 25%](#) in exchange for assurances they will not face deeper curtailments during the June-September growing season. Riparian water rights are among the most secure in the state's water rights system and are curtailed only when natural stream flow is inadequate to serve the reasonable uses of all riparian water rights holders.
- **USBR and Water Users Reach Agreement to Provide CVP Water to Friant Area:** On May 14, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), in partnership with water users in the Central Valley, [announced](#) that they have developed an agreement that will provide about 60,000 acre-feet of Central Valley Project (CVP) water to growers in the CVP's Friant Division this summer. The agreement would leave water that the Exchange Contractors would be entitled to in Millerton Lake, making it available for Friant Division contractors, rather than having USBR make equivalent releases down the San Joaquin River, as was done last year to provide a partial supply to the Exchange Contractors. This agreement is the result of weeks of negotiations among members of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, Friant Division contractors, Westlands Water District, USBR and other agencies.
- **Governor's May Budget Revision Considered by Legislature:** The May Revision to the Governor's proposed budget for the coming fiscal year was considered by legislative budget subcommittees this week. The [May Revision](#) includes over \$2.2 billion in new or expedited funding for drought response which will protect and expand local water supplies, conserve water and respond to emergency conditions.
- **State Water Board Approves \$19 Million for Interim Emergency Drinking Water and Drought-Related Projects:** On May 19, the State Water Board approved guidelines for \$19 million in funding to help public agencies, community water systems, non-profit organizations and tribal governments meet [emergency drinking water needs](#). This \$19 million in funding allows the Water Board's emergency drinking water program to continue help public drinking water systems vulnerable to running out of water. The approved guidelines for this funding will streamline the process of identifying communities with the most immediate need.
- **USDA to Expand Investment in Water Conservation:** On May 18, USDA [announced](#) that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will invest approximately \$21 million in additional Farm Bill dollars to help farmers and ranchers apply science-based solutions to mitigate the short and long term effects of drought. These investments will focus financial and technical assistance in the most severely drought-stricken areas in eight states to help crop and livestock producers apply conservation practices that increase irrigation efficiency, improve soil health and productivity, and ensure reliable water sources for livestock operations.

- **Funding Opportunity for Regional Coastal Resilience Grants:** On May 19, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [announced](#) \$5 million in funding for the [2015 Regional Coastal Resilience Grant Program](#) that was requested and appropriated as part of NOAA's fiscal year 2015 budget. The coastal resilience grants program will support regional approaches to activities that build resilience of coastal regions, communities, and economic sectors to the negative impacts from extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions.
- **DOI Announces Comprehensive Rangeland Fire Strategy:** On May 20, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) [released a comprehensive, science-based strategy](#) to address the increasing threat of wildfires that are damaging vital sagebrush landscapes and productive rangelands in the West. The [Strategy](#) provides a more focused, coordinated and collaborative approach for rangeland fire management, particularly in the Great Basin region of Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Oregon and California. The final report delineates a series of actions that federal and state wildland fire managers and their partners can take to improve efforts to prevent and suppress rangeland fires as well as restore burned rangelands to healthy landscapes.
- **Bureau of Reclamation Water Efficiency and Conservation Funds:** On May 20, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) [announced](#) that the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) will invest almost \$50 million to improve water efficiency and conservation in California and 11 other western states through the [WaterSMART Program](#) in a continued effort to bring relief to western communities suffering from the historic drought.

According to DOI, [26 California water projects](#) will receive a combined total of approximately \$33 million be invested in water and energy efficient projects, water reclamation and reuse projects and feasibility studies in California. For descriptions of the approved water and energy efficient projects, please visit the USBR Water & Energy Efficiency Grants [webpage](#).

- **Webinar Provides Information on Water Conservation, Tools and Assistance for Local Agencies:** On May 21, the Governor's Office co-hosted the first [drought webinar series](#) with the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the League of Cities and provided information on new state conservation funding and rebate programs, outdoor irrigation regulations, streamlining efforts for critical water supply projects and technical tools available to water agencies. On May 26, the [final webinar series](#) will highlight the state's emergency regulations and restrictions for water usage and regulations for small systems.
- **Irrigation Workshops Will Help Landscape Professionals Use Water Efficiently Amid New Restrictions:** On May 21, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the California Center for Urban Horticulture (CCUH) will hold three workshops at UC Davis over the next few weeks to help professional landscapers improve water use efficiency. For more information on the workshops, please visit the [CCUH website](#).
- **Emergency Food Aid Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 654,000 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 591,575 boxes of food have been picked up by 311,936 households. By May 29, an additional 8,400 boxes will be delivered to Fresno, Kern, Stanislaus, and Tulare counties.

- **Utility, Rental and Relocation Assistance:** The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) allocated an additional \$600,000, under the federally-funded Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), to continue the [Drought Water Assistance Program \(DWAP\)](#) pilot project which provides financial assistance to help low-income families pay their water bills. As of May 14, CSD has reported that a total of \$61,643 has been issued to 278 households.

The non-profit group La Cooperativa continues to distribute the \$10 million state-funded emergency rental assistance to families and individuals across counties most impacted by the drought. As of May 7, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$8,748,670 have been issued to 5,909 applicants in 21 counties, with \$8,330 remaining in assistance funds.

HCD and the Office of Emergency Services continue to work with households connected to water systems that are less than 15 units or private wells that no longer have access to potable water. This new program will provide residents with relocation and temporary rental assistance. If enacted into law, this program will be funded through the emergency drought package included in the Governor's May Revision proposal. HCD is currently reaching out to all stakeholders to determine the best program design and will be preparing draft program guidelines in June.

- **California's Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** The Save Our Water team has started work on planning and implementing the 2015 summer campaign. This month, Save Our Water featured an updated section on tree-care during the drought. In addition, a public opinion survey and various public service announcements (PSAs) are being explored to help guide future outreach to further promote Save Our Water messaging which will feature prominent Californians. For easy-to-use water saving tips visit saveourwater.com, and connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).
- **Drought Response Funding:** The \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated last March through emergency legislation, as well as \$142 million provided in the 2014 Budget Act, continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. To date, \$468 million has been committed, and nearly \$625 million of the emergency funds appropriated in March came from sources dedicated to capital improvements to water systems. Since March, the Department of Water Resources has expedited grant approvals, getting \$21 million immediately allocated to grantees that were pre-approved for certain projects.

As planned in March, the next \$200 million of expedited capital funding was awarded in October, and the remaining \$250 million will be granted by fall 2015. The 2014 Budget Act appropriated an additional \$53.8 million to CAL FIRE over its typical budget to enhance firefighter surge capacity and retain seasonal firefighters beyond the typical fire season.

As a result of continuing drought conditions, emergency legislation was enacted in March 2015 that appropriated over \$1 billion of additional funds for drought-related projects and activities. The Administration's May Revision proposal includes an additional \$2.2 billion for programs that protect and expand local water supplies, improve water conservation, and provide immediate relief to impacted communities.

- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought. On May 21, updates on drought response, water operations and environmental habitat, and external outreach were provided. The Task Force continues to work on campaigns to support and fund water conservation efforts, promote water conservation and water efficiency projects at state facilities through a \$10.0 million grant. In addition, the California Department of Public Health provided an update on the drought impacts to public health such as the recent rise in West Nile Virus across the state.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Fire Activity: Since the beginning of the year, CAL FIRE has responded to over 1,533 wildfires across the state, burning 6,195 acres in the State Responsibility Area. This fire activity is above the five year average for the same time period with 969 fires and 6,089 acres burned. CAL FIRE will continue to augment resources throughout the state in preparation for peak fire season.

As the state transitions to the dry season, open burn bans are once again being implemented in many counties. Recently, [burn bans were instituted](#) in Fresno, King, Monterey, San Benito, Tulare County and Marin County.

Dry Well Reports: As California enters the fourth consecutive summer of drought, Cal OES continues to monitor and identify communities and local water systems in danger of running out of water. Approximately 1,982 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, which affects an estimated 9,910 residents. As of May 20, Cal OES has reported that 1,681 of the 1,982 dry wells are concentrated in the inland regions within the Central Valley.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The State Water Board continues to provide technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages, and is monitoring water systems across the state. Since January 2014, 81 out of the 103 projects approved to receive emergency funding for interim replacement drinking water have been executed. On May 19, the State Water Board adopted Guidelines for administering the latest emergency drought appropriations of \$19 million announced this past March. To date, the State Water Board has received requests for \$1.1 million of those funds.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): Since May 22, reservoirs around the State are drawing down storage for irrigation, water supply, water quality, and Delta salinity control. Shasta has dropped 53,000 acre-feet, Oroville has dropped 53,000 acre-feet, Trinity Lake has dropped 25,000 acre-feet, Folsom has dropped 10,000 acre-feet, and San Luis has dropped 38,000 acre-feet. A few Tulare Basin reservoirs have increased storage: Pine Flat +9,000 acre-feet, Terminus +2,000 acre-feet, and Lake McClure +4,000 acre-feet.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of May 25 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 33% of capacity (37% of year to date average); Don Pedro 41% of capacity (54% of average); Exchequer 12% of capacity (18% of average); Folsom Lake 56% of capacity (68% of average); Lake Oroville 45% of capacity (54% of average); Lake Perris 40% (48% of average); Millerton Lake 35% of capacity (46% of average); New Melones 19% of capacity (30% of average); Pine Flat 25% of capacity (36% of average); San Luis 55% of capacity (68% of average); Lake Shasta 54% of capacity (63% of average); and Trinity Lake 43% of capacity (50% of average). An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Recent Precipitation: Over the last week, most of the State was dry. Areas experiencing precipitation included the Sierras (1 to 2 inches), Northern California near Shasta (1 to 3 inches) and the coastal mountains in Southern California (0.5 to 1.5 inches).

Precipitation Forecast: For the coming week, higher elevations may experience similar precipitation amounts expected due to the low pressure system. High pressure and warming temperatures are likely to return at the end of next week.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 57 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **26 Counties:** El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Plumas, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.
 - **11 Cities:** City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Manteca (San Joaquin County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Porterville (Tulare County), City of Portola (Plumas County), City of Ripon (San Joaquin County), City of San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County), and City of West Sacramento (Yolo County), and City of Willits (Mendocino County).
 - **9 Tribes:** Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County), Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County), Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians (Madera County) Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe (Mendocino County), Tule River Indian Tribe (Tulare County), Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Yolo County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt County).
 - **12 Special Districts:** Carpinteria Valley Water District (Santa Barbara County), Goleta Water District (Santa Barbara County), Groveland Community Services District (Tuolumne County), Lake Don Pedro Community Services District (Mariposa Stanislaus County), Mariposa Public Utility District (Mariposa County), Meiners Oaks Water District (Ventura County), Montecito Water District (Santa Barbara County), Mountain House Community Service District (San Joaquin County), Nevada Irrigation District (Nevada County), Placer County Water Agency (Placer County), Tuolumne Utilities District (Tuolumne County), and Twain Harte Community Services District (Tuolumne County).
- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** The Association of California Water Agencies (AWCA) [has identified](#) several hundred local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies [are responding to the drought](#) by implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.

- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 31 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 4 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians (Sonoma County), Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt and Del Norte County).

DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Drought.CA.Gov](#): California's Drought Information Clearinghouse

State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save our Water](#)
Local Government, [Drought Clearinghouse and Toolkit](#)

California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought information](#)
California Department of Water Resources, [Current Water Conditions](#)
California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)

California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
State Water Resources Control Board, Drinking Water, [SWRCB Drinking Water Program](#)
California State Water Project, [Information](#)

[U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Current Conditions throughout the Region
[U.S. Drought Portal](#), National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)

National Weather Service [Climate Predictor Center](#)

USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)

USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)

U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance Office: www.sba.gov/disaster