



Drought Update Tuesday, July 28, 2015

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **California WaterFix Comment Period Extended to Oct. 30:** On July 22, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation [announced](#) a 60-day extension on the public comment period for the recirculated environmental documents for California WaterFix, which is the proposed water conveyance improvement plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. For more information on California WaterFix, visit the website [here](#).
- **Draft Regulations Released to Guide Groundwater Basin Boundary Revision:** On July 17, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) opened the public comment period on [proposed draft emergency regulations](#) that will outline the process local agencies must follow when requesting modifications to existing boundaries of groundwater basins and sub-basins. For additional information on the draft regulations, visit DWR's Basin Boundary Revision webpage [here](#).
- **USDA and NASA Expand Innovative Partnership to Better Predict Wildfires, Monitor Drought from Space:** On July 16, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) [announced](#) an expanded partnership designed to better protect America's working lands, predict and prevent natural disasters, and inspire young people to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and agriculture.

Under the new agreement, USDA has expanded access to NASA satellite data, which will help U.S. Forest Service's fire fighters and first responders to better detect wildfires and predict their behavior. Additionally, the satellite data could be used to create soil moisture maps for California to improve weather and water availability forecasting and to provide a drought early-warning system for producers.

- **California's Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** This past week, Save Our Water, in partnership with the Bay Area Council, released a new [public service announcement](#) featuring Sergio Romo, San Francisco Giants Pitcher, asking residents to keep "saving together" by fixing leaks and limiting outdoor watering. Save Our Water has also partnered with [California ReLeaf](#) to raise awareness of the importance of proper tree care during the drought. In addition, a new section on the Save Our Water website is promoting California Native Plant Society as a key part of Save Our Water's [landscaping tips](#).

Save Our Water's new media campaign asks Californians to share a helping hand by "Saving Together" with a selfie. [Saving Together](#) is about creating a social movement of Californians sharing water-saving tips to encourage and empower others to join the effort. For more tips and tools to help conserve water and keep trees healthy during the drought, please visit Save Our Water's website, which is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), or connect with the program on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought. During the most recent Task Force meeting on July 23, the State Water Board reported that the June water conservation numbers will be announced at the July 29 Board meeting. In addition, the Governor's Office of the Tribal Advisor will hold the next drought webinar tribal consultation meeting on August 19.

ONGOING DROUGHT SUPPORT

- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental and Utility Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP) provides food assistance to affected communities that suffer high levels of unemployment from the drought. To date, over 780,950 boxes have been provided to community food banks in drought-impacted counties, with an average of approximately 13,250 food boxes per week since June 2014. Approximately 692,170 boxes of food have been picked up by 364,066 households.

Food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. Over 70% of the food distributions have occurred in the Tulare Basin (Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare). There are 8,400 boxes scheduled for delivery for the week ending July 31, to Fresno, Kern, Riverside, San Joaquin and Tulare County.

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 \(DWAP\)](#) which provides financial assistance to help low-income families pay their water bills. As of July 17, CSD has reported that a total of \$260,258 has been issued to 1,353 households.

CSD is in the process of allocating \$400,000, under CSBG, to continue the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program, which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. This program provides employment training and placement services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers suffering job loss or reduced employment due to the drought. To date, CSD has reported that a total of \$10,000 has been issued to the Center for Employment Training located in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz County.

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.

CURRENT DROUGHT CONDITIONS

- **Fire Activity:** Since the beginning of the year, firefighters from CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service have responded to 4,445 wildfires across the state, burning 74,766 acres. Fire activity across California remains high with over 316 wildfires in just the past week. To date, CAL FIRE has experienced a 52% increase in wildfire activity compared to the 5-year average for the same time period.
- **CAL FIRE Suspends Outdoor Residential Burning:** California's increased fire activity this year, coupled with record-setting drought conditions, require CAL FIRE to take every step possible to prevent new wildfires from starting. To date, CAL FIRE has suspended burn permits in all counties in the State Responsibility Area. This suspension bans all residential outdoor burning of landscape debris including branches and leaves. The department may issue restricted temporary burning permits if there is an essential reason due to public health and safety. For additional information on preparing for and preventing wildfires, please visit www.ReadyForWildfire.Org.
- **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 2,091 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, which affects an estimated 10,455 residents. As of July 22, Cal OES has reported that 1,987 of the 2,091 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, 85 out of the 112 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 \$3.8 million of those funds.
- **Projected Reservoir Management:** Shasta Reservoir recorded 2,038,000 acre-feet (AF) on July 23 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 6,500 AF/day. Releases are being held lower than normal to keep cold water in the reservoir for Winter Run Chinook Salmon later in the fall. Shasta Reservoir is projected to reach 1,460,000 AF by the end of September. This is higher than the 1976-77 record low storage of 700,000 AF.

Oroville Reservoir recorded 1,224,000 AF on July 23 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 6,900 AF/day. Releases are higher than normal to help make up for reduced flows out of Shasta. These higher flows are to keep salt water from coming too far into the Delta and to meet other joint federal-state obligations. Oroville Reservoir is projected to reach 900,000 AF by the end of September. This storage is about the same as the record low 1976-77 storage level.

Folsom Reservoir recorded 316,000 AF on July 23 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 5,800 AF/day. Releases are higher than normal to help make up for reduced flows out of Shasta. Folsom Reservoir is projected to reach 120,000 AF by the end of September. This is lower than the 1976-77 record low storage of 150,000 AF.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of July 26 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 38% of capacity (45% of year to date average); Don Pedro 35% of capacity (45% of average); Exchequer 11% of capacity (17% of average); Folsom Lake 31% of capacity (43% of average); Lake Oroville 34% of capacity (45% of average); Lake Perris 36% (45% of average); Millerton Lake 34% of capacity (53% of average); New Melones 15% of capacity (24% of average); Pine Flat 17% of capacity (32% of average); San Luis 27% of capacity (53% of average); Lake Shasta 44% of capacity (61% of average); and Trinity Lake 34% of capacity (43% of average). An update of water levels at other [smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

- **Weather Outlook:** Dry weather continues this week with temperatures returning to well above average as high pressure strengthens. Increasing monsoon moisture may lead to an increasing chance of mountain thunderstorms by the weekend.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 58 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **25 Counties:** El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, 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.
 - **12 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), City of Rancho Cucamonga (San Bernardino 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.

ACWA [released](#) a Drought Response Toolkit to assist water agencies as they take action to meet state-mandated water conservation target and communicate information about water use restrictions, enforcement and other issues with their customers, media and other audiences.

- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 33 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Humboldt, 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, Solano, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 7 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Hopland Tribe (Mendocino County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou County), La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians (San Diego County), Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County), Trinidad Tribe (Humboldt 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