



Drought Update

Wednesday, August 26, 2015

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **Drought's Economic Toll to California Estimated at \$2.7 Billion in 2015:** On August 17, the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences [released a new report](#) indicating that California's ongoing drought will impact the state's agricultural economy this year by \$2.7 billion and eliminate more than 21,000 jobs. The report, compiled with the assistance from the Department of Water Resources, explains that the use of groundwater is largely mitigating the impact of the drought to agriculture by offsetting the loss of surface water. For more details, the report is available [here](#).
- **NASA Report: Drought Causing Valley Land to Sink:** On August 19, the Department of Water Resources [released a report based on NASA satellite data](#) showing land in the San Joaquin Valley is sinking faster than ever before, nearly two inches per month in some locations. Sinking land, known as subsidence, has occurred for decades in California because of excessive groundwater pumping during drought conditions, but the new NASA data shows the sinking is happening faster, putting infrastructure at risk. To view the full report, click [here](#).
- **DWR Releases Draft List of Critically Overdrafted Groundwater Basins, Schedules Public Meetings:** On August 19, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [released](#) its draft list of [Critically Overdrafted Groundwater Basins](#). The draft list identifies 21 groundwater basins and subbasins that have been overdrafted due to excessive groundwater pumping. DWR will open a 30-day comment period and hold two public meetings to discuss its draft list, the process used to make its findings, and solicit public comment. For more information regarding California's groundwater, please visit DWR's [website](#).
- **New Site Provides Data on Household Water Shortages:** On August 21, the Department of Water Resources (DWR), in partnership with key state agencies, developed a new system that improves and streamlines data collection and reporting for household water shortages for California water systems with fewer than 15 household connections. The [Household Water Supply Shortage Reporting System's webpage](#) provides summary tables, a map and more information about the program.
- **Emergency Merced River Angling Closure in Effect as of Aug. 18:** On August 18, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) [announced the emergency closure of the lower Merced River](#) to angling earlier than usual due to high water temperatures. The lower Merced River is typically closed to angling from November 1 through December 31. The river is still scheduled to be closed during that period, and will re-open to anglers on January 1, 2016. Additional information on emergency angling closures, including can be found on CDFW's [website](#).

- **Continuing Drought Would Hit Rural Areas the Hardest, Report States:** On August 20, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) [released a new report](#) that indicates California's greatest vulnerabilities are in low-income rural communities where wells are running dry and in California's wetlands, rivers and forests, where the state's iconic biodiversity is under extreme threat. PPIC also indicates that two to three more years of drought will increase challenges in all areas and require continued and increasingly difficult adaptations. To view the full report, visit PPIC's website [here](#).
- **Climate Change Impacts on California Water Detailed by DWR:** On August 21, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [released a new report](#) that outlines the hydrologic changes expected to result from climate change. The report also indicates that climate change will bring rising seas, longer droughts, less snowpack and higher temperatures to California and elsewhere, which will require water managers to develop new scientific-based strategies to adapt. These findings were presented at the [California Climate Change Symposium 2015](#) held at the Sacramento Convention Center on August 24-25. To view the report, click [here](#).
- **DOE Selects UC Berkeley to Lead Consortium for U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center's Energy-Water Track:** On August 20, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [announced](#) that UC Berkeley has been selected to lead a group of university, nonprofit, utility, and national laboratory partners in a new technical track under the U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center ([CERC](#)) that addresses water-related aspects of energy production and use.
- **Recommendations for Lessening the Burden of the California Drought on Low-Income Communities:** On August 19, the Center for American Progress (CAP) [released a new report](#) that explores the connection of climate change and inequality in the context of the California drought, highlighting the unique and disproportionate challenges faced by California's low-income communities. This report also offers recommendations on how policymakers can lessen the burden the drought has placed on low-income people living in tribal, rural, and farming communities. To view the full report, visit CAP's website [here](#).
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- **California's Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** This past week, television personality Mario Lopez participated in the [Saving Together](#) campaign with a selfie on Twitter and Instagram, reaching more than 1.5 million people. Lopez has also recorded three Save Our Water radio ads which will air on Clear Channel Stations. In addition, the Spanish-language press announcement of Sergio Romo PSA and Save Our Water Spanish website were released last week.

On August 18, Save Our Water, in partnership with California ReLeaf and the U.S. Forest Service, [produced two how-to videos](#) to show California residents how to best care for their trees during this historic drought. The new videos educate viewers to the benefits of trees to California and the importance of caring for trees in times of drought.

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 August 20, the Governor's Office announced that the next regional task force meeting will be on September 2 in Los Angeles. In addition, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) attended the meeting and provided a briefing on impacts of continued drought to Task Force principals and members.

ONGOING DROUGHT SUPPORT

- **Emergency Food Aid, Utility and Employment 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 818,175 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 743,642 boxes of food have been picked up by 391,003 households.

Food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. Nearly 70% of the food distributions have occurred in the Tulare Basin (Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare). There are 12,300 boxes scheduled for delivery for the week ending August 28, to Butte, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Merced, Riverside, Santa Cruz, and Tulare counties.

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 August 14, CSD has reported that a total of \$361,187 has been issued to 1,811 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 \$10,843 has been issued to the Center for Employment Training, California Human Development, and Central Valley Opportunity Center with 14 participants enrolled.

In response to California's historic drought, CSD has received \$7.5 million in General Fund to implement the Drought Emergency Assistance Program (DEAP) to provide emergency relief and support services to drought-impacted individuals and their families and households. As of August 14, CSD has reported that a total of \$115,843 has been issued to 103 households.

- **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 5,857 wildfires across the state, burning 342,698 acres. Fire activity across California remains high with nearly 201 wildfires in just the past week.
- **CAL FIRE Suspends Outdoor Residential Burning:** California's increased fire activity this year, coupled with record-setting drought conditions, has caused CAL FIRE to [suspend burn permits](#) in all counties in the State Responsibility Area.
- **Dry Well Reports:** With California in its fourth year of a severe, hot drought, the Governor's Drought Task Force continues to monitor and identify communities and local water systems in danger of running out of water. Recently, a cross-agency team, led by DWR, developed a new system that improves and streamlines data collection and reporting for [household water shortages](#) for California water systems with fewer than 15 household connections.

As of August 19, approximately 2,225 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, which affects an estimated 9,488 residents. Cal OES has reported that 2,128 of the 2,225 dry wells are concentrated in the inland regions within the Central Valley. If you are experiencing a water supply shortage, please [submit a report](#) on DWR's website.

- **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, 91 out of the 119 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 \$3.7 million of those funds.

- **Projected Reservoir Management:** Shasta Reservoir recorded 1,857,959 acre-feet (AF) on August 20 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 6,523 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 1,088,050 AF on August 20 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 2,603 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 219,426 AF on August 20 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 3,088 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 August 23 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 37% of capacity (45% of year to date average); Don Pedro 32% of capacity (45% of average); Exchequer 10% of capacity (17% of average); Folsom Lake 22% of capacity (34% of average); Lake Oroville 31% of capacity (45% of average); Lake Perris 36% (46% of average); Millerton Lake 31% of capacity (62% of average); New Melones 13% of capacity (22% of average); Pine Flat 13% of capacity (31% of average); San Luis 20% of capacity (46% of average); Lake Shasta 40% of capacity (62% of average); and Trinity Lake 30% of capacity (39% of average). An update of water levels at other [smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

- **Weather Outlook:** Mainly dry weather can be expected over the area for the next several days. Temperatures will remain near to slightly above normal as the upper-level ridge lingers over the region. Some light rain is possible throughout the week in higher mountain elevations and the southwestern deserts, and in the Bay Area near the end of the week.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 60 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **27 Counties:** Butte, 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, Stanislaus, 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