



Bi-Weekly Drought Brief Monday, September 15, 2014

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Fire Activity: CAL FIRE has responded to 4,750 wildfires across the state since January 1, burning 86,784 acres. This year's fire activity is above the year-to-date average of 3,777 wildfires on 84,356 acres. CAL FIRE responded to over 150 new wildfires last week, including the Gulch Fire in Shasta County, which has burned more than 1,300 acres with 45% containment.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): [Reservoir Levels](#) as of September 11 remain low, including: Don Pedro 39%; Exchequer 14%; Folsom Lake 38%; Lake Oroville 31%; Millerton Lake 41%; New Melones 22%; Pine Flat 12%; San Luis 20%; Lake Shasta 28%; and Trinity Lake 27%. An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The State Water Board's Drinking Water Program is providing technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages, and is monitoring water systems across the state to determine if new support is needed. As of this week, a total to date of over \$11.6 million has been identified for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March for this purpose. Updated information can be found on the [State Water Board's Drinking Water Program](#) website.

Tropical Storm Watch: Tropical Storm Odile is currently off the coast of Southwestern Mexico and slowly drifting toward the west. It is forecasted to continue the slow westerly drift through Friday, September 12 and will strengthen to be a hurricane. However, the center of Odile is expected to remain well offshore of the coast of Southwestern Mexico through Saturday, September 13. The National Weather Service (NWS) San Diego reports that Odile could bring a significant influx of moisture with the possibility of showers and thunderstorms with locally heavy rainfall beginning next Wednesday, September 17 through Friday, September 19 in the far southeastern and southwestern portion of the state.

Recent Precipitation: Southern California received heavy precipitation confined to the far southern mountains and deserts between Friday, September 5 and Friday, September 12. Below, please find the areas that received significant precipitation amounts:

- **Palm Springs:** 0.04" in the last week.
- **Riverside:** 0.23" in the last week.
- **San Bernardino:** 0.50" in the last week.
- **Inland Mountains (between San Diego and Los Angeles):** 2.00" in the last week
- **Desert Areas (between San Diego and Los Angeles):** 2.25" in the last week

** Overall, this event did not improve the long-term drought conditions of the state.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **Historic Groundwater Package Approved by the Legislature:** A three-bill package aimed at advancing [sustainable groundwater management](#) throughout California was approved by the Legislature on Friday, August 29 and sent to Gov. Jerry Brown for signature.

The package of bills would enact the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and provide a framework for the improved management of groundwater supplies by local authorities. The bills also would provide a mechanism for limited state intervention when necessary to protect groundwater resources.

- **Urban Water Suppliers Achieve Conservation Progress Statewide:** California's urban water suppliers are making headway in their water conservation efforts, achieving a [7.5 percent drop in usage statewide](#) this July over last year's figures, according to a survey released by the State Water Board on Tuesday, September 9.

Beginning October 15, water suppliers will also be required to provide an estimate of gallons per-capita per-day (GPCD) for residential customers. While the overall amount of water production is important information, the best way to measure conservation is to measure the daily amount of water used by residential customers.

- **Water Agencies Step Up Conservation as Drought Deepens:** Public water agencies around the state are [stepping up conservation efforts](#), expanding rebate programs and pursuing an array of innovative programs to reduce water use in response to California's deepening drought. Nearly 60% of California is now in "exceptional drought," the most severe on the U.S. Drought Monitor's five-point scale. About 82% of the state is in "extreme drought," while 95% is now in "severe drought."

As of Monday, September 8, approximately 159 local water agencies have implemented mandatory restrictions on water use, according to information compiled by the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA). Others are expected to take formal action soon to align their local conservation measures with new emergency regulations adopted July 15 by the State Water Board.

- **Reclamation Opens Public Comment Period on Temperance Flat Water Storage Proposal:** On Friday, September 5, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the [Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigation](#), a study which investigates water storage options for California's Central Valley.

DEIS describes possible benefits and impacts of increasing water storage through a proposed dam and reservoir project to improve water supply reliability and flexibility for agricultural, urban and environmental uses at Temperance Flat on the upper San Joaquin River, about 25 miles northeast of Fresno.

- **Regional Cooperation and Water Transfers Provide Drought Relief for Bay Area Water Agencies:** On Monday, September 8, Bay Area water officials are utilizing a [pilot project of water transfer agreements and regional cooperation](#) to help endure ongoing drought conditions. The agreement between the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) and the Alameda County Water District (ACWD) illustrates how regional cooperation and targeted water transfers can increase water supply reliability.

- **Agencies Expediting Well Drilling Licensing During California Drought:** With the drought now posing health and safety concerns for families who rely on well water, and businesses that need ground water resources, the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) is expediting applications for C-57 [Well Drilling contractors](#).

CSLB and partner agencies are identifying potential bottlenecks that might slow the regulatory processes enabling well drillers to perform their trade, or for out-of-state well drillers to assist during California's drought.

- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental and Utility Assistance:** The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 244,850 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 191,457 boxes of food have been picked up by 99,791 households. By this Friday, September 19, an additional 12,345 will be delivered to six counties. Local food banks continue to target this food aid to residents most impacted by the drought.

The non-profit group La Cooperativa continues to distribute the \$10 million state-funded emergency rental assistance to impacted families and individuals across counties most impacted by the drought. As of Thursday, September 10, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$4,698,427 is committed; and \$3,203,666 in funds has been issued to 2,364 applicants in 20 counties.

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) has created a \$600,000 program to help families pay their water bills. This program targets families through 10 agencies that are experiencing "exceptional" drought. As of Friday, September 5, CSD has reported that a total of \$58,476 has been issued to 563 households.

CSD has also implemented a \$400,000 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program, in coordination with the California Human Development (CHD), Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), Center for Employment Training (CET) and Proteus, which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. As of Friday, September 5, 60 clients are enrolled in employment training programs, 6 clients have obtained employment, and 48 clients are receiving employment support services. CSD has also reported that a total of \$92,527 has been spent to assist participants in completing training employment programs.

- **Sacramento Zoo Joins the Effort to Save Water:** In coordination with Save Our Water and the California Governor' Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), [the Sacramento Zoo have joined forces to help promote water saving practices](#) through innovative water conservation efforts in horticulture, animal care and park maintenance. To showcase the Zoo's water saving practices, Cal OES has produced a [video](#) highlighting what the Zoo has accomplished and how easily the animals have adjusted.
- **Water Saving Tips Promoted Across the State:** The state's newly improved water conservation website, [SaveOurWater.com](#), is promoting the "Don't Waste Summer" campaign. This campaign provides a new conservation tip each day for the 100 days of summer. Supporters can sign up for daily email tips, and share Save Our Water's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) feeds for this public awareness campaign.

- **Open Burn Ban in Affect across the State:** Open burning continues to be prohibited on 31 million acres of land across the state due to the [burn ban that CAL FIRE](#) has directed through the coordination of its unit chiefs. This ban on open burning in state responsibility areas (outside of cities and towns) reduces wildfire danger amidst extremely dry conditions.
- **Drought Response Funding:** \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated in March through emergency legislation continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. Over \$61 million of this funding addresses emergency water needs, food aid and housing assistance to drought-impacted communities. Nearly \$21 million of those funds are already in communities providing assistance and additional funds are being readied as drought impacts worsen. Nearly \$625 million of the emergency funds appropriated in March came from sources dedicated to capital improvements to water systems. Since March, state agencies have expedited grant approvals, getting over \$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 will be awarded this fall, with the remaining \$250 million granted by mid next-year. State government has also appropriated tens of millions in funding to CAL FIRE over its typical budget to enable staffing-up fire crews much earlier this fire season.
- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to meet daily to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

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:** Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Napa, Plumas, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.
 - **13 Cities:** City of Willits (Mendocino County), City of St. Helena (Napa County), City of Calistoga (Napa County), City of American Canyon (Napa County), City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Portola (Plumas County), City of Ripon (San Joaquin County), City of Rio Dell (Humboldt County), and City of West Sacramento (Yolo County).
 - **8 Tribes:** Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Yurok Tribe (Humboldt County), Tule River Indian Tribe (Tulare County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties), Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe (Mendocino County), Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Yolo County), Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County) and Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County).
 - **12 Special Districts:** Brooktrails Township (Mendocino County), Lake Don Pedro Community Services District (Stanislaus County), Placer County Water Agency (Placer County), Twain Harte Community Services District (Tuolumne County), Carpinteria Valley Water District (Santa Barbara County), Meiners Oaks Water District (Ventura County), Mariposa Public Utility District (Mariposa County), Goleta Water District

(Santa Barbara County), Montecito Water District (Santa Barbara County), Tuolumne Utilities District (Tuolumne County), Mountain House Community Service District (San Joaquin County), Nevada Irrigation District (Nevada 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 30 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, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 2 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt Counties).

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