



Bi-Weekly Drought Brief Monday, November 24, 2014

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Gov. Jerry Brown Says Drought will Test “Political Capacity to Collaborate”: On Thursday, November 13, Gov. Jerry Brown said tackling the drought that is wracking California and much of the western United States will "test our imagination, our science and our political capacity to collaborate." Speaking at the [Western Governors' Association \(WGA\) Drought Forum](#), a two-day event in Sacramento, Brown highlighted the need for creative thinking and continued conservation.

The Drought Forum was launched to foster a regional dialogue in which Western states and industry could share best practices on drought policy, preparedness and management, and seek to identify ways to mitigate the impact of drought on communities, economies and the environment.

Voters Approve State Proposition 1: On Tuesday, November 4, California voters passed Proposition 1, the [Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014](#), which authorizes \$7.5 billion in funding for a range of water projects and programs as part of a comprehensive water plan for the state.

Fire Activity: CAL FIRE has responded to 5,532 wildfires across the state since January 1, burning 90,746 acres in state responsibility areas. This year's fire activity is above the year-to-date average of 4,488 wildfires on 86,982 acres. CAL FIRE responded to over 35 new wildfires last week.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): [Reservoir Levels](#) as of November 20 remain low, including: Don Pedro 37%; Exchequer 8%; Folsom Lake 29%; Lake Oroville 25%; Millerton Lake 34%; New Melones 21%; Pine Flat 12%; San Luis 21%; Lake Shasta 23%; and Trinity Lake 23%. An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The State Water Board's [Drinking Water Program](#) continues to provide 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 \$13.6 million has been identified for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March for this purpose.

Recent Precipitation: California experienced scattered amounts of precipitation during the last week. Precipitation totals (in inches) from Monday, November 17 through Monday, November 24:

- **Folsom Dam:** 0.51"
- **Hetch Hetchy:** 0.91"
- **Modesto:** 0.06"
- **Oroville:** 1.32"
- **Redding:** 2.84"
- **Shasta Dam:** 3.00"
- **Sacramento:** 0.48"
- **Willits:** 3.84"

** This rainfall will have minimal effect on California's drought conditions, and reservoir water levels will remain largely unchanged. Due to low water supplies from the two previous dry years, California remains in drought conditions. **

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **State Water Board Conservation Report Updates:** The State Water Board will be releasing water production figures for the month of November on Tuesday, December 2. Preliminary results indicate a decline in the amount of water conserved for the month of October 2014, as compared to October 2013, from the conservation levels achieved for the month of September. The State Water Board will be holding a workshop on Wednesday, December 17, in Los Angeles to discuss what additional actions it should take, if any, if drought conditions persist.
- **State Water Board Lifts Curtailments in the Russian River Watershed:** On Friday, November 19, the State Water Board lifted the water right curtailments for all post-1914 water right permits and licenses in the [Russian River watershed](#) based on water conservation savings in the watershed, recent increases in tributary flows, and reduced diversion demands as of Friday, October 31.

With this notice, the only curtailments remaining in effect are in the Scott River Watershed, Deer Creek (in accordance with the Emergency Fish Flow regulations) and for those water right holders subject to Term 91. Based on current and trending conditions, Term 91 for water rights holders in the Delta watershed may be lifted in the next 1-2 weeks.

- **Central Coast Water Board Approves Cambria Emergency Drought Project:** On Friday, November 14, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board approved permits allowing the [Cambria Community Services District](#) to operate an emergency water treatment system designed to increase the community's water supplies during the drought. The Central Coast Water Board worked closely with the State Water Board's Drinking Water Division in its review and approval process to protect public health. This is the first project in the state to use the Drinking Water Division's new regulations for direct groundwater augmentation.
- **State Water Board Lifts Curtailments for Pre-1954 Water Rights Holders:** On Wednesday, November 19, the State Water Board lifted water right curtailments in the [Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds](#) for water rights holders with a priority date of December 31, 1953 and earlier. This action is based on the switch in diversion demand from direct diversion to storage, and the reduced diversion demands as of Friday, October 31. According to the State Board's notice, this announcement does not affect other types of curtailments including Term 91 curtailment and curtailment orders for Deer Creek.
- **Workshop Series to Focus on Groundwater Implementation:** A series of regional workshops focused on [implementing new groundwater legislation](#) is scheduled for 2015. The workshops, titled "Implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: Local Governance Approaches and Considerations," is sponsored by ACWA, California Water Foundation, California State Association of Counties and Rural County Representative of California, and is intended for senior local government officials and water agency decision makers.

- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental and Utility Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 363,440 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 315,960 boxes of food have been picked up by 168,398 households. By this Friday, November 28, an additional 8,400 boxes will be delivered to five 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, November 13, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$8,075,997 is committed; and \$6,435,471 in funds has been issued to 4,095 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, November 14, CSD has reported that a total of \$315,837 has been issued to 1,767 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, November 14, 114 clients are enrolled in employment training programs, 12 clients have obtained employment, and 93 clients are receiving employment support services. CSD has also reported that a total of \$228,070 has been spent to assist participants in completing training employment programs.

- **Bureau of Reclamation Invests \$9.2 million in Water and Power Research:** On Wednesday, November 19, the US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) awarded \$9.2 million for [131 research projects](#) to develop innovative solutions that will provide tools to guide a sustainable water and power future for the West. The projects awarded will focus on five research priority areas which include increasing water supply through advanced water treatment technologies, improving water infrastructure reliability and safety, and optimizing hydropower and other forms of renewable energy. For more information, please visit [USBR Research and Development](#).
- **New San Joaquin River Watershed Website Launched:** On Thursday, November 13, the Coalition for Urban Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES) announced the [launch of its](#) new website, www.sanjoaquinriverwaterquality.com, featuring information related to the San Joaquin River watershed. The website provides water monitoring data, studies, reports and articles about the San Joaquin River watershed. The website was developed using grant funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency and the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency.
- **San Diego Council Votes to Move Forward with Plan to Recycle Wastewater for Drinking:** The San Diego City Council on Tuesday, November 18, unanimously voted to move forward with a \$2.5 billion plan to recycle the city’s wastewater for drinking as part of its [Pure Water San Diego Program](#). Under the plan, the city would purify 83 million gallons per day by 2023 or enough to provide about one-third its water supply. Currently, 85% of San Diego’s water is imported.

- **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.
- **Statewide Open Burn Ban Update:** Due to recent rain in some parts of Northern California, several local burns have been lifted. However, a majority of the state remains under a burn ban due to drought conditions. The [burn ban](#) prohibits certain outdoor burning in the State Responsibility Area (SRA). For those areas where the ban has been lifted, daily fire and weather conditions will dictate whether burning is permissible that day.
- **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 60 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **26 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, Yuba, and El Dorado.
 - **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).

- **9 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), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County), and Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians (Madera 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 3 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Yurok Tribe (Humboldt Counties) and Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino 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