



Drought Update

Monday, December 21, 2015

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **California's Conservation Continues to Meet Cumulative Target:** On December 1, the State Water Board [announced](#) that Californians have reduced water use by 27.1 percent, or 297.8 billion gallons, in the five months since emergency conservation regulations took effect in June. According to the State Water Board, urban residents reduced water usage over 2013 levels by an average of 22.2 percent in [October](#), down from 26.4 percent in September. Despite a decline in the statewide water-savings rate for October, California residents are on track to meet Governor Brown's 25 percent conservation mandate through February 2016.
- **State Water Board Authorizes \$5 Million to Help Private Well Owners and Small Water Systems:** On December 15, the State Water Board [adopted](#) a resolution authorizing the allocation of \$5 million in funds to help residents on private wells and small water systems who are facing water emergencies. The funds, which will be administered by nonprofit organizations, will help individuals that have an immediate drought-related water shortage or outage, and assist in permanent solutions such as new wells, well rehabilitation, and consolidation into new or existing public water systems.
- **Initial SWP 2016 Allocation Set at 10 Percent:** On December 1, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [announced](#) the initial 2016 State Water Project (SWP) allocation at 10% and indicated that the actual allocation could rise or fall depending on the amount of rain and snow California receives this winter. According to DWR, reservoir levels across the state remain significantly low, despite California's early season storms. Low reservoir levels will provide plenty of room for runoff from El Niño-driven storms should they develop, but even an extremely wet winter would not return conditions, especially groundwater levels, to normal after four consecutive dry years.
- **State Water Board Approves Revised Order on Water Operations:** On December 15, the State Water Board [approved](#) an order that largely upholds protections for municipal water supplies and fisheries that were in place earlier this year due to extreme drought conditions. The December 15 order adds new provisions to ensure that the federal Central Valley Project plans maintain minimum reservoir storage levels in two key north state reservoirs as a precaution if dry conditions continue into 2016. For more information, view the [revised order](#).
- **State Water Board Workshop Examines Conservation Regulation:** On December 7, the State Water Board [held](#) a public workshop to discuss concepts and examine ways to potentially alter the state's emergency water conservation regulation to make it more equitable if it is extended beyond February 2016. Earlier this year, Governor Brown mandated Californians to cut water usage by 25 percent over 2013 levels from June through February 2016. Last month, the Governor issued an additional [Executive Order](#) giving the State Water Board authority to extend and revise the emergency water conservation regulations.

- **State Water Board to Host December 17 Workshop on Draft Regulation on Measuring and Reporting Requirements for Diversions:** On December 10, the State Water Board [announced](#) a public workshop scheduled for December 17 to receive comments on a draft emergency regulation which adds new measurement and reporting requirements for water right holders and claimants that divert 10 acre-feet of water or more per year. The draft emergency regulation is expected to affect approximately 12,000 water right holders and claimants. For more information, visit State Water Board’s Measurement Regulation [website](#).
- **California’s Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** On December 8, Save Our Water released a new [PSA](#), which included Golden State Warrior stars Stephen Curry & Klay Thompson (“Splash Brothers”), in the Comcast Sports Network (CSN) Bay Area reminding Californians to continue conserving water while preparing for flooding throughout the winter season. On December 17, Save Our Water and Curiosity Quest Goes Green, an award-winning, nationally syndicated show, [launched](#) a series of educational [videos](#) on teaching kids about indoor and outdoor water conservation.

In addition, Save Our Water continues to promote the “[Claim your Turf Replacement](#)”, and “[Claim Your Toilet](#)” rebate programs. 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 December 10 meeting, DWR indicated the next manual snowpack survey is scheduled for December 31. In addition, the Labor Workforce Development Agency announced that the federally funded Drought Temporary Jobs program has enrolled 678 participants at 136 worksite projects in 24 counties. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Labor’s National Dislocated Worker Grant program which offers 6 months of employment on drought-related public works projects for up to 1,000 workers affected by the drought.

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 1,069,540 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 965,930 boxes of food have been picked up by 502,390 households.

Food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. Nearly 72% of the food distributions have occurred in the Tulare Basin (Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare). There are 9,600 boxes scheduled for delivery for the week ending December 24 to Fresno, Kern, Riverside, 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 December 10, CSD has reported that a total of \$594,953 has been issued to 2,966 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 \$184,154 has been issued with 86 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 December 4, CSD has reported that a total of \$3,915,572 has been issued to 2,778 households for rental, utility and food assistance.

- **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

- **Recent Precipitation:** In the past week, there has been light to heavy amounts of rainfall throughout the State. Highest amounts occurred in the North Coast with 7-day totals ranging from 2-17 inches, with the highest amounts being over the Smith Basin. The Russian Napa basin experienced precipitation ranging from 0.5 to 2 inches over the same period. Both Northern and Southern Sierras, and the San Diego areas received 1 to 2 inches.

Below are precipitation totals (in inches) from December 11 through December 18, and year-to-date rainfall based on the water year cycle (October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016).

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| • Bakersfield: 0.19" (0.94") | • Monterey: 1.39" (5.71") |
| • Paso Robles: 0.23" (1.61") | • Redding: 0.91" (5.63") |
| • Fresno: 0.45" (2.87") | • Riverside: 0.11" (0.57") |
| • Yosemite: 2.25" (10.65") | • Sacramento: 0.47" (2.64") |
| • Los Angeles: 0.21" (0.67") | • San Diego: 0.35" (2.32") |
| • Stockton: 0.65" (3.24") | • Mount Shasta: 1.25" (6.94") |
| • San Francisco: 1.30" (3.27") | • South Lake Tahoe: 0.70" (5.47") |

- **Fire Activity:** Since the beginning of the year, firefighters from CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service have responded to over 8,277 wildfires across the state, burning 825,717 acres. Fire activity across California remains high with nearly 234 combined wildfires in just the past two weeks.
- **CAL FIRE Burn Suspension Status:** Due to cooler temperatures and recent rains, CAL FIRE has lifted the burn suspension in the State Responsibility Area in Northern California and portions of Central California, allowing residential outdoor burning of landscape debris with a permit. CAL FIRE continues to monitor weather conditions closely and has the ability to increase staffing should the weather conditions change or if there is a need to support wildfire activity and any other emergencies in the State. For additional information on preparing for and preventing wildfires, please visit <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/>.
- **Dry Well Reports:** With California at the end of 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. Over the summer, 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 December 9, approximately 2,588 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, which affects an estimated 12,940 residents. Cal OES has reported that 2,441 of the 2,588 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, 103 out of the 145 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 \$6.1 million of those funds.

Projected Reservoir Management: Since the last report on December 11, Central Valley reservoirs from Shasta and Trinity in the North to Isabella in the South had a net gain in storage of 59,956 acre-feet (AF), with a total gain of 84,356 AF and a total loss of 24,400 AF. Shasta Reservoir increased by 27,615 AF, while San Luis Reservoir, an off-stream reservoir for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, decreased its storage by 21,871 AF.

- [Reservoir Levels](#) as of December 17 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 37% of capacity (48% of year to date average); Don Pedro 32% of capacity (49% of average); Exchequer 6% of capacity (14% of average); Folsom Lake 15% of capacity (31% of average); Lake Oroville 26% of capacity (43% of average); Lake Perris 35% (45% of average); Millerton Lake 31% of capacity (66% of average); New Melones 11% of capacity (20% of average); Pine Flat 14% of capacity (35% of average); San Luis 17% of capacity (26% of average); Lake Shasta 30% of capacity (49% of average); and Trinity Lake 20% of capacity (30% of average). An update of water levels at other [smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

- **Weather Outlook:** A series of systems are expected to occur over the next week. The first system beginning Friday afternoon and into early Saturday is expected to bring moderate precipitation amounts to the northern part of the state with highest amounts focused over the North Coast, Russian Napa basins, and the Northern Sierras.

Beginning Sunday, precipitation is expected to return to the North Coast, Russian Napa, and Northern Sierras and continue through Wednesday. Highest amounts in the North are expected to reach 3 to 6 inches in a 24-hour period beginning Monday through Tuesday. The Russian Napa and North Sierra are expecting 1 to 2 inches over the same period.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 63 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **29 Counties:** Butte, Colusa, Calaveras, 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, Stanislaus, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.
 - **13 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), City of West Sacramento (Yolo County), City of Willits (Mendocino County) and the City of Fort Bragg (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