



Bi-Weekly Drought Brief Monday, September 29, 2014

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Fire Activity: CAL FIRE has responded to 5,038 wildfires across the state since January 1, burning 90,731 acres. This year's fire activity is above the year-to-date average of 4,036 wildfires on 86,987 acres. CAL FIRE responded to over 100 new wildfires last week, including the Happy Camp Complex in Siskiyou County, which has burned more than 132,700 acres with 94% containment, and the King Fire in El Dorado and Placer Counties, which has burned nearly 97,000 acres with 89% containment.

Governor's Executive Order: On Wednesday, September 17, Governor Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency for El Dorado and Siskiyou counties due to the effects of the King and Boles fires, which have burned thousands of acres, destroyed homes and other structures and damaged critical infrastructure. This proclamation provides relief for residents affected by the fires by waiving fees to replace documents such as driver's licenses and birth certificates.

Governor Brown also waived the one-week waiting period for unemployment, and has encouraged the Franchise Tax Board and Board of Equalization to ease any administrative processes where appropriate for individuals and businesses impacted by the wildfires.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): [Reservoir Levels](#) as of September 25 remain low, including: Don Pedro 39%; Exchequer 12%; Folsom Lake 36%; Lake Oroville 31%; Millerton Lake 35%; New Melones 22%; Pine Flat 12%; San Luis 22%; Lake Shasta 26%; and Trinity Lake 25%. 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 \$11.7 million has been identified for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March for this purpose.

Recent Precipitation: Significant precipitation fell over the past week in Northern California. Precipitation totals (in inches) from Tuesday, September 23 through Friday, September 26:

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Crescent City: 2.88" | • Weed: 2.29" |
| • Arcata: 2.70" | • Shasta Dam: 3.08" |
| • Willits: 0.88" | • Sacramento: 0.37" |
| • Sawyers Bar: 2.12" | • Redding: 2.48" |
| • Hoopa: 2.28" | • San Francisco: 0.51" |
| • Camino: 0.86" | • Stockton: 0.59" |
| • South Lake Tahoe: 0.18" | • Oroville: 0.51" |
| • Quincy: 0.96" | • Modesto: 0.30" |

** 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

- **Governor Brown Issues Executive Order to Assist Households with Water Shortages:** On Friday, September 19, Governor Jerry Brown [issued an executive order](#) aimed at making funds available under the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA), and waives advertising and competitive bidding requirements to purchase water for the protection of health, safety and the environment. The [order](#) also prohibits price gouging in times of emergency, and streamlines assistance to households that rely on domestic wells or small water systems that are currently without drinking water.
- **Historic California Drought Linked to Global Warming:** A new study released on Monday, September 29, by [Stanford University climate scientists](#) states that the conditions contributing to the historic drought in California are "very likely" linked to human-caused climate change. The study was published as a supplement to this month's issue of the [Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society](#) which is one of the most comprehensive studies to investigate the link between climate change and California's ongoing drought.
- **New Report Predicts Climate Change Will Significantly Impact California's Central Valley:** On Monday, September 22, the Department of the Interior released the [Sacramento-San Joaquin Basins Climate Impact Assessment](#) that provides an overview of the current climate and hydrology over the entire Central Valley including the Sacramento, San Joaquin and Tulare Lake basins. The study also evaluates how projected climatic and hydrologic changes could impact water availability, management and demands while analyzing impacts of future urban growth and changes in land-use within the Central Valley.
- **DWR Opens Public Comment Period for Funding Proposed Drought Projects:** On Tuesday, September 23, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced its' [recommendations for allocating the \\$200 million grant funds](#) to 23 Integrated Regional Water Management Groups (RWMGs) for at least 110 projects and programs to alleviate the impacts of the current drought and improve regional drought preparedness. The expedited funding of the grants is made possible through the \$687.4 million package of drought-response legislation signed by Governor Jerry Brown in March.
- **TUCP Order Changes Approved by the State Water Board:** On Wednesday, September 24, the State Water Board adopted an order that responds to objections and denied petitions for reconsideration of the Delta Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP) Order that was approved earlier this year.

The newly adopted order upholds the findings in the Delta's previous TUCP order, denies the petitions, and increases the evaluation and reporting required of the Department of Water Resources and United States Bureau of Reclamation. These additional requirements will help the state prepare for another dry year and will increase public transparency of the information used to support changes in state and federal water project operations.

- **State Water Board Discusses Delta Diversifiers Allegations:** On Wednesday, September 24, the State Water Board held a workshop to discuss allegations of the Department of Water Resources and US Bureau of Reclamation that delta diversifiers are illegally taking stored project water that is released to repel salinity and meet export conditions. The Board is considering the workshop input to determine what short and long term steps can be taken to address the long standing and complex issues included in these allegations.
- **State Water Board Denies Deer Creek Diversion Reconsideration:** During the September 24 State Water Board meeting, the Board adopted an order denying a challenge to the May 2014 emergency regulations and subsequent Curtailment Order for Deer Creek, tributary to the Sacramento River. This tributary was identified by the Department of Fish and Wildlife as a high-priority for fish protection during the drought. The emergency regulations and Curtailment Order required minimum flows during the spring and the fall to allow fish passage.
- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental and Utility Assistance:** The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 269,100 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 218,385 boxes of food have been picked up by 113,488 households. By this Friday, October 3, an additional 10,440 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 18, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$5,336,890 is committed; and \$3,685,355 in funds has been issued to 2,614 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 19, CSD has reported that a total of \$64,868 has been issued to 581 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 19, 67 clients are enrolled in employment training programs, 6 clients have obtained employment, and 53 clients are receiving employment support services. CSD has also reported that a total of \$136,833 has been spent to assist participants in completing training employment programs.

- **Drought Toolkits Used to Raise Drought Awareness in Communities Vulnerable to Water Shortages:** On Saturday, September 20, the Home Depot store in Madera hosted an event to increase water conservation awareness in Madera County and distribute 3,000 drought toolkits to households experiencing or vulnerable to water shortages in disadvantaged communities throughout the County.

Home Depot donated a total of 30,000 drought toolkits and approximately 17,000 toolkits have been distributed to communities experiencing or vulnerable to water shortages in Fresno, Kern, Tulare, Madera, Tuolumne, Butte, Shasta, Tehama, Modoc, Humboldt, Siskiyou, Trinity, Colusa and Sacramento Counties. The remaining 13,000 toolkits will be distributed by mid-October.

- **Sacramento-Area Agencies Reduce Water Use by 20% or More in August:** The Regional Water Authority (RWA) announced on Thursday, September 18, that 14 of the water providers it represents have accomplished impressive [water savings of at least 20% or more](#) in August 2014, as compared to last August's numbers.
- **Joint Water and Energy Conservation Messaging Toolkit Released:** Save Our Water and Energy Upgrade California launched a collaborative messaging effort this month to spread the word about conserving both water and energy. A messaging toolkit offering the public tips on ways to save both resources – indoors and outdoors – is available at www.saveourh2o.org and at www.energyupgradeca.org.
- **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