



December 6, 2021

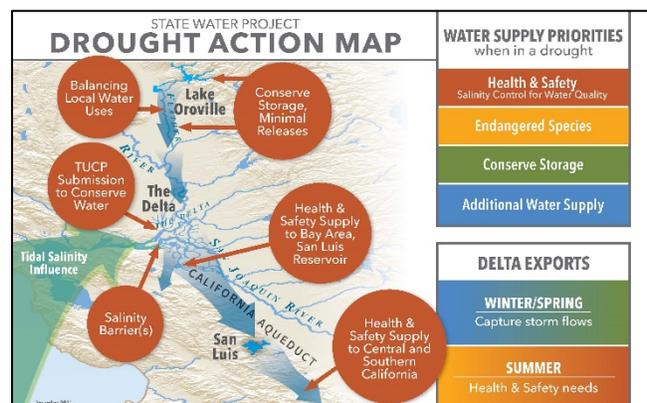
The California Drought Update is a weekly roundup of conditions, state actions and upcoming developments. It is produced by an interagency team that includes the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Public Health. For the latest on drought, please visit www.drought.ca.gov. For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit www.saveourwater.com.

Current Conditions

- The water year that ended Sept. 30 was the second driest on record. All of California’s 58 counties are now under a drought emergency proclamation.
- After two dry years, reservoir storage is markedly below 2019 levels, underscoring the need for ongoing water conservation.
- Californians are being asked to reduce their water use by 15 percent over 2020 levels to protect water reserves and help maintain critical flows for fish and wildlife wherever possible.
- As of Dec. 5, the state’s [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 38 dry wells in the past 30 days, a decrease of 69 percent from the previous 30 days. Most of the dry wells were reported in Butte, Fresno, Madera, Mendocino and Tulare counties.
- The state is providing hauled or bottled water to eight separate small water providers experiencing supply outages in Monterey, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Tulare, Shasta, El Dorado and Los Angeles counties. The providers together serve a population of a little under 3,000 people.

Recent Events and State Actions

DWR announces initial State Water Project allocation (Dec. 1): DWR announced its initial State Water Project allocation for 2022 along with several steps to manage the state’s water supply in anticipation of a third dry year with reservoirs at or near historic lows. The SWP’s initial allocation is essentially a zero percent allocation although water will be delivered for the health and safety needs of the 29 water agencies that contract to receive SWP supplies. The total volume of water expected to be delivered to meet these needs is approximately 340,000 acre-feet, with approximately 80 percent of that water going to the SWP’s largest contractor, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, for its



retail agencies. DWR is making plans to adjust State Water Project operations this winter and spring to preserve as much storage as possible in Lake Oroville. Health and safety demands for the Bay Area and Central and Southern California will be met with water available from the Delta and also stored in San Luis Reservoir. Water in Lake Oroville will be reserved to maintain Delta water quality, protect endangered species, and meet senior water right needs. The initial allocation may be adjusted depending upon the winter's precipitation.

Request for regulatory relief filed (Dec. 1): DWR, along with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, submitted a new [Temporary Urgency Change Petition](#) to the State Water Resources Control Board for the period Feb. 1 through April 30. This would allow for the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project to operate under modifications to the water quality and water right permit requirements in the Delta, should conditions warrant. These modifications may be needed to conserve water in Lake Oroville to ensure minimum health and safety water supplies are available later in the year if dry conditions persist. If significant precipitation materializes in the next few months, standards may be met through natural means and modifications to SWP and CVP operations may not be necessary.

Drought salinity barrier to stay, with modification (Dec. 1): DWR announced it is delaying the removal of the emergency drought salinity barrier in the Delta. The rock barrier across West False River was scheduled to be removed by November 30, however drought conditions have persisted and leaving the



barrier in place will enable a more efficient response in spring 2022. In January, DWR plans to lower a 400-foot-long stretch of the 800-foot-long rock barrier across West False River to allow passage of boats and fish. The “notch” in the 30-foot-tall barrier will allow about 12 feet of water to flow over the base of the barrier. Leaving the rock base in place will save time and money in the likely condition that the full barrier must be re-installed in April to physically repel salinity. The full barrier allows water project operators to preserve

storage in upstream reservoirs.

Water Board releases draft set of prohibited uses of water (Nov. 30): The State Water Board released for public comment a [draft emergency regulation](#) to prohibit water waste and bolster water conservation and will consider a regulation for adoption early next year. If adopted, the regulation will be effective Jan. 5 and will make wasteful water practices, such as excessive irrigation causing runoff, using potable water for street cleaning, or irrigating landscapes within 48 hours of measurable rainfall, a violation for all Californians, including businesses and institutions. Local water districts would be expected to enforce the regulations, and violations could result in fines. In addition, the regulation would allow the State Water Board to prevent homeowners' associations from restricting water conservation measures, such as installing drought-tolerant landscaping. Governor Newsom's [October drought proclamation](#) directed the State Water Board to consider and adopt the prohibitions if necessary.

DWR and Water Board send indoor residential efficiency recommendations to Legislature (Nov. 30): DWR and the State Water Board submitted a [report](#) to the Legislature recommending that urban water suppliers achieve an indoor water use efficiency standard of 55 gallons per capita per day by 2023, declining to 47 gallons per day by 2025, and 42 gallons by 2030 and beyond. If adopted by the

Legislature, the standards recommended by DWR and the State Water Board would be implemented at the water supplier level and would not apply to individual customers. The report, required under 2018 legislation, is intended to inform the Legislature as it considers next steps to advance progressive and achievable indoor residential water use standards. The recommendation follows the release of a [DWR report](#) that finds median California indoor residential water use is 48 gallons per capita per day, and that a quarter of households already use less than 42 gallons. Indoor residential water use is expected to decline even in the absence of legislation lowering the indoor standard due to plumbing code requirements and more efficient appliances and fixtures being used in existing and new homes.

DWR announces approach to repairing major aqueducts (Nov. 29): DWR initiated a \$100 million funding program to restore capacity to portions of the California Aqueduct, San Luis Canal, Delta-Mendota Canal, and Friant-Kern Canal lost to land subsidence occurring during the last several decades. The 2021-22 State Budget Act appropriated \$100 million for this program and authorized an additional \$100 million for next fiscal year. This state-funded program is part of a cooperative approach to fixing California’s water conveyance infrastructure being pursued by local, state, and federal agencies. Agencies with funded projects will need to investigate the risk of subsidence and how to prevent continued subsidence.



Save Our Water partnership with 49ers kicks off (ongoing): The 49ers released on social media a water conservation [public service announcement](#) featuring player Deebo Samuel. In-stadium ads and signage are in place. Save Our Water also can be found on electronic billboards, radio and local TV programming around the state. A TikTok campaign, outreach to college students, weather-specific messaging, and a “Save Our Trees” push are in the works.

Curtailment adjustments in several watersheds (ongoing): The State Water Board has reimposed curtailments for several sub-watersheds in the Sacramento and Scott rivers. Curtailments were suspended in the watersheds following the October atmospheric river event. With below-average precipitation in November, water demand now exceeds supply in some tributary watersheds of the Sacramento; however, weak weather systems moving through the upper Central Valley the week of Dec. 6 may result in the temporary lifting of curtailments for a small number of senior diverters in some sub-watersheds. Flows in the Scott are below the emergency target of 150 cubic feet per second recommended by the Department of Fish and Wildlife and incorporated into the State Water Board’s emergency regulation. Board staff evaluates conditions multiple times a week and will adjust curtailment statuses as conditions change.

Tribal / Local Actions

- **Tribal governments:** Tribal emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Karuk Tribe, Resighini Rancheria, Tule River Indian Tribe, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.

- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

October water conservation rates: At its meeting on **Dec. 7** the State Water Board will discuss urban water district conservation rates for the month of October 2021 compared to October 2020.

Delta curtailment methodology workshop: The Water Rights Division of the State Water Board will hold a public workshop **Dec. 15** to explain and discuss its Delta curtailment methodology. Details can be found in the [workshop notice](#).

Key Data Points and Resources

- Daily Hydrological & Climate Information summary: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=DLYHYDRO>
- Statewide water conditions: http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water_cond.html
- Daily Reservoir Storage Summary: <https://cdec.water.ca.gov/reservoir.html>
- Water Year Forecast and Monthly Distribution: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=B120DIST>
- Monthly water supplier reports on water production and conservation: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/conservation_reporting.html
- Latest groundwater conditions and information: <https://sgmatest.water.ca.gov/CalGWLive/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://www.drought.ca.gov>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>