



January 10, 2022

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 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 Jan. 10, the state's [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 6 dry wells in the past 30 days, a decrease of 68 percent from the previous 30 days. Dry wells were reported primarily in Glenn and San Luis Obispo 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

Governor's California Blueprint provides \$750 million to address drought challenges (Jan. 10): Building on historic investments in water resilience in the 2021-22 budget, [Governor Newsom's California Blueprint](#) released Jan. 10 includes an additional \$750 million to address drought challenges that have grown more acute and that disproportionately affect low-income and underrepresented communities. The proposal includes \$100 million to help Californians make permanent changes to use water as efficiently as possible, and another \$75 million for turf removal / replacement.



December storms boost snowpack (Dec. 28-30): A series of cold winter storms hit California in late December, bringing much-needed rain and a boost to the Sierra snowpack. Snowfall totals of 202 inches at Donner Pass on Interstate 80 set a record for the month of December. Since December 12, storms have added more than 610,000 acre-feet of storage to major federal and state reservoirs. Oroville and

Folsom gained more storage from the storms in relative terms than Shasta. On December 27, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation made releases from Folsom for flood control. End-of-month reservoir storage in the 154 reservoirs tracked by DWR increased to 78 percent of average in December, nearly matching last year's 82 percent of average at the same time. Since most reservoirs are held at low levels during the winter months for flood control, the real test of storage recovery will come this spring when flood control restrictions are lifted, and reservoirs can refill with snowmelt runoff.

Season's first snowpack survey shows benefit of storms (Dec. 30): A manual survey at Echo Summit in the Sierra Nevada mountains recorded 78.5 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 20 inches, which is 202 percent of average for this location on Dec. 30. The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of DWR's water supply forecast. Statewide the snowpack was 160 percent of average for that date. On average, the Sierra snowpack supplies about 30 percent of California's water needs. DWR conducts five media-oriented snow surveys at Echo Summit each winter near the first of each month from January through April and, if necessary, May.



Hydropower generation resumes at Oroville Dam (Jan. 4): Hydropower generation has resumed at the Hyatt Powerplant at Oroville Dam in Butte County. The powerplant was taken offline Aug. 5 due to historic low lake levels driven by the state's ongoing severe drought conditions. Recent storms have boosted lake levels and provided colder water in the reservoir to allow operations to resume. Currently, the powerplant is utilizing one generating unit to supply the state's electrical grid. Outflows from the plant and generation will initially remain low due to reduced agricultural demands and improved Delta salinity conditions. As lake levels rise and demands increase, additional units will be brought back online.

Californians conserve 6.8 percent in November (Jan. 4): Urban water suppliers reported a statewide average savings in water consumption for November 2021 of 6.8 percent compared to November 2020. That puts the cumulative statewide savings rate at 6 percent since July, when the Governor called on Californians to voluntarily conserve at least 15 percent. Regions that saw the most rain in October also reported the greatest savings; the North Coast reported a savings rate of 25.9 percent while the South Coast, where conditions were relatively dry, reported a .8 percent increase in water consumption. The Bay Area, with 20 percent of the state's population, reduced water use by more than 20 percent in November compared to the same month a year earlier.

Water waste rules adopted (Jan. 4): Noting that water conservation is the easiest, most efficient, and most cost-effective way to extend supplies into next year, the Water Board adopted a proposed resolution regarding a drought-related emergency regulation to prevent waste and unreasonable use of water. The proposed emergency regulation, which goes next to the Office of Administrative Law, would prohibit runoff from landscape sprinklers, the washing of vehicles without an automatic shutoff nozzle, use of potable water for construction site preparation and street cleaning, and irrigation of turf on public street medians, among other wasteful practices. The proposed regulation includes exemptions for public health and safety and could take effect as early as mid-January.

DWR begins work on salinity barrier notch (Jan. 5): DWR has begun construction of a notch in the drought salinity barrier on the West False River to allow boat and fish passage. The notch will be

completed by Jan 25. The barrier, which was deployed June 2021, helps limit saltwater intrusion during drought and prevents contamination of freshwater in the Delta.

Curtailments lifted (ongoing): With December’s storms, the Water Board has lifted all water right curtailment orders except in Mill and Deer creeks, where the curtailment orders are self-adjusting and flow targets have been met. Curtailments in the Scott River were temporarily suspended between Jan. 5 and Jan. 8 due to a brief increase in streamflow but are likely to be reimposed soon. In addition, Term 91 – a permit condition that essentially requires water right holders to cease diverting water when the state and federal water projects are releasing previously stored water to meet water quality and flow requirements in the Delta – is no longer in effect. Water Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change.

Adjustments to water quality permit conditions may not be needed (Jan. 5): Following analysis of December’s storms, DWR has determined that the wet conditions have forestalled the need for DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to request a waiver from certain water quality requirements in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta starting Feb. 1 in order to preserve upstream reservoir storage. The state and federal water projects will continue to closely monitor hydrologic conditions to determine if a waiver may be needed later in the spring.

Save Our Water joins TikTok (ongoing): To kickstart its new TikTok campaign, Save Our Water curated an arsenal of videos packed with insightful tips on saving water, including original content and trend spin-offs like lip syncs, music videos, challenges, and life hacks. Follow [@SaveOurWaterCA](https://www.tiktok.com/@SaveOurWaterCA) and use #SaveOurWater in your own water wise TikToks.



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.
- **Water suppliers:** The following public water suppliers have imposed mandatory water use reductions on customers, according to information voluntarily provided to the Association of California Water Agencies and / or recent announcements. The list likely is not comprehensive:
 - Alameda County Water District – mandatory water use restrictions aimed at reducing water use by 15 percent.
 - Brooktrails Community Services District – usage cap of 9,000 gallons per month, all customers
 - Indian Wells Valley Water District – 20 percent
 - Marin Municipal Water District – 40 percent
 - Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Conservation Improvement District – 40 percent
 - Modesto Irrigation District – irrigation allocation capped at 36 inches per acre
 - Montague Water Conservation District – 95 percent
 - Nevada Irrigation District – 20 percent
 - Reclamation District 1500 – 25 percent

- Richvale Irrigation District – 50 percent
- City of Santa Rosa – 20 percent
- Westlands Water District – no outdoor water use by municipal and industrial customers

The following private water companies have imposed a 15 percent mandatory water use reduction:

- San Jose Water Company, with drought surcharges for excessive water use
- Great Oaks Water Company, with drought surcharges for excessive water use
- California-American Water Company (in the Larkfield and Geyersville districts of Sonoma County, with fines for non-essential water use
- Cold Springs Water Company in Tuolumne County
- North Gualala Water Company in Sonoma County

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Season's second snow survey: DWR is tentatively planning the second snow survey of the winter on **Feb. 1**, including a media availability at Echo Summit in the Sierra Nevada.

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/>