



March 7, 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 under a drought emergency proclamation.
- Following substantial rain and snowfall in December 2021, January and February 2022 were the driest consecutive January and February on record dating back over 100 years in the Sierra Nevada.
- 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 March 7, the state’s [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 16 dry wells in the past 30 days. Dry wells were reported primarily in Humboldt, Butte and Tehama 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

Drought-relief funding awarded to 18 communities (March 4):

With California preparing for a third dry year, DWR announced its sixth round of local assistance through the [Small Community Drought Relief program](#). In coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board, DWR has allotted \$49 million in funding for 18 projects across the state. Projects include 15 that will directly support disadvantaged communities, including five Tribes, with infrastructure repairs, well rehabilitation, and hauled water. To date, DWR has committed \$141.7 million to 68 projects. Total program funding is \$200 million, and Governor Gavin Newsom has proposed an additional \$60 million in funding for the next fiscal year.

Budget Augmented for Drought Activities (March 4): The final 2021-22 state budget act authorized the Department of Finance



(DOF) to augment approved appropriations by up to \$25 million total in current year to support drought activities. DOF has notified the Joint Legislative Budget Committee that it is augmenting budget funds for DWR, the Water Board and CDFA to respond to the drought emergency. In a March 4 letter, DOF said an additional \$13.25 million is being provided to DWR, including \$8.25 million to support water conservation messaging and activities for the Save Our Water program and \$5 million for near-term improvements to forecasts of spring runoff. In addition, \$6.75 million is being provided to the Water Board for emergency drinking water, drought and water outage emergencies and to support water rights litigation. Another \$2.5 million is being provided to CDFA – on top of \$2.5 million already provided in January – to support direct relief grants to small-scale and historically underserved farmers.

Workshops held to assist small water suppliers (March 2 and 4): The Water Board held two workshops to give county staff and non-governmental organizations an overview of funding and resources available to address water quality and drought impacts to state small water systems (those with five to 14 connections) and domestic well users. Participants learned about current programs and how to apply for funding and assistance.

Agencies present salmon abundance forecast (March 2): State and federal fishery scientists presented updates on the numbers of spawning salmon that returned to California’s rivers in 2021 and shared the expected abundance for the upcoming fishing season. The 2022 ocean abundance projection for Sacramento River fall chinook, a main salmon stock harvested in California waters, is estimated at 396,500 adult salmon, higher than the 2021 forecasts. The Klamath River fall chinook abundance forecast also came in slightly above the 2021 value, with 200,100 adult Klamath River fall chinook salmon predicted to be in the ocean this year, a value that remains well below the stock’s historical levels. The Pacific Fishery Management Council will use this information and stakeholder input to adopt regulations in mid-April.

Drought budget proposal (March 2): Leaders of CNRA, DWR, CDFW, the Water Board, and CDFA testified about the Governor’s proposed \$750 million drought response and resilience package before Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3 Climate Crisis, Resources, Energy and Transportation. The Governor’s proposal is in addition to the \$5.2 billion over three years included in the 2021-22 budget for water resilience.

Snow survey shows results of dry January and February (March 1): DWR conducted the third snow survey of the season at Phillips Station. Following a January and February that will enter records as the driest documented in state history, the manual survey recorded 35 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 16 inches, which is 68 percent of average for this location for March. 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 is 63 percent of average for this date.

Delta farm water use reduction pilot projects underway (ongoing): In January, in partnership with DWR, the Delta Conservancy launched a program that pays landowners to deploy practices that will result in reduced consumptive water use and help the state and Delta community better understand how best to invest in water conservation in prolonged or future drought. As of March 3, the program had committed \$8 million to 35 projects, enrolling approximately 8,800 acres with an estimated water savings of 22,000 acre-feet.

Curtailments adjusted (ongoing): The Water Board lifted curtailments in most watersheds following December’s storms, but dry conditions in January and February have led to re-imposition of curtailments in some areas. Curtailments have been reinstated in a few sub-watersheds of the Delta watershed. It is

likely that additional curtailments will be reinstated March 11 through March 15 if conditions remain dry. Water Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders 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.
- **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
 - Zone 7 – 15 percent

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, as well as the Los Angeles and San Diego districts of the respective counties, with fines for non-essential water use)
- Cold Springs Water Company in Tuolumne County
- North Gualala Water Company in Sonoma County

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Annual water supply and demand workshop: DWR will host a virtual public meeting **March 7** on its draft guidance for preparing the annual water supply and demand assessment required by SB 606, one

of the “make conservation a way of life laws” enacted in 2018. DWR staff will review the draft guidance and gather input from attendees. Urban water suppliers are required to conduct an annual water supply and demand assessment and submit an annual water shortage assessment report to DWR on or before July 1 of each year, starting in 2022.

Water Board workshop on Sacramento River temperature management: The Water Board will host a workshop **March 16** to discuss temperature management considerations that can inform planning for the 2022 season and future years. The discussion includes the status of Sacramento River chinook salmon, factors affecting mortality, assessment of temperature and temperature-dependent modeling, and policy considerations, including tribal issues and environmental justice.

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/>