



Drought Update

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Governor Brown Directs First Ever Statewide Mandatory Water Reductions: On April 1, Governor Brown issued an [Executive Order](#) to save water, increase enforcement to prevent wasteful water use, streamline the state's drought response and invest in new technologies to make California more drought resilient. Governor Brown unveiled the actions at the April 1 announcement of the state's lowest snowpack on record. Updates on the Executive Order's implementation can be found at www.drought.ca.gov.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Recent Precipitation: Last week, up to 2 inches of rain and snow fell along the North Coast and the Northern Sierra. The Central Valley, Southern Sierra, and Central Coast received as much as 1 inch of precipitation. Very light precipitation (0.1-0.2 inch) occurred in coastal Southern California.

Below are precipitation totals (in inches) from Monday, April 6, through Monday, April 13, and year-to-date rainfall based on the water year cycle (October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015).

- **Bakersfield:** 0.06" (4.59")
- **Folsom Dam:** 0.79" (23.91")
- **Fresno:** 0.56" (5.16")
- **Hetch Hetchy:** 2.18" (15.89")
- **Los Angeles:** 0.13" (7.46")
- **Modesto:** 0.42" (9.77")
- **Oroville:** 1.32" (24.64")
- **Pacific House:** 1.28" (25.88")
- **Redding:** 1.12" (30.92")
- **Riverside:** 0.06" (3.91")
- **Sacramento:** 0.76" (12.63")
- **San Diego:** 0.00" (6.51")
- **Shasta Dam:** 1.92" (48.92")
- **Willits:** 1.36" (37.36")

Precipitation Forecast: A small storm system is bringing limited precipitation to far northern California Monday early this week. Warm and dry conditions return across state for the remainder of this week. Isolated snow and rain showers are possible over the Sierra by next weekend.

Snow Survey: The latest [manual snow surveys](#), conducted on April 1, recorded California snowpack at 5 percent of the historic April 1 average. A more recent update using the [automated snow sensors](#) captured the recent series of winter storms and boosted the snowpack by a few percent, which is the first significant increase in the last two months. As of April 8, the statewide snowpack conditions now stand at 8 percent of average. Regionally, both the Northern and Central Sierra Nevada are at 8 percent of average while the Southern Sierra Nevada is at 7 percent of average.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): Since the last report on April 3, Central Valley reservoirs from Shasta and Trinity in the North to Isabella in the South had a net loss in storage of 16,500 acre-feet. Shasta Reservoir increased by 19,800 acre-feet, while San Luis Reservoir, an off-stream reservoir for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, decreased its storage by 16,200 acre-feet.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of April 9 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 30% of capacity (33% of year to date average); Don Pedro 43% of capacity (58% of average); Exchequer 9% of capacity (16% of average); Folsom Lake 59% of capacity (87% of average); Lake Oroville 51% of capacity (65% of average); Lake Perris 39% (46% of average); Millerton Lake 39% of capacity (55% of average); New Melones 22% of capacity (36% of average); Pine Flat 19% of capacity (33% of average); San Luis 65% of capacity (72% of average); Lake Shasta 60% of capacity (72% of average); and Trinity Lake 49% of capacity (61% of average). An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Fire Activity: Since the beginning of the year, CAL FIRE has responded to over 630 wildfires across the state, burning 3,358 acres in the State Responsibility Area. This fire activity is above the five year average for the same time period with 441 fires and 1,239 acres burned. CAL FIRE continues to prepare for the wildfire season through training, and is prepared to augment staffing across the State in response to the drought conditions.

Statewide Open Burn Ban Update: Although burn bans have been lifted throughout the State during the winter, restrictions on burning remain in place in many areas. Some jurisdictions still require homeowners to obtain a burn permit. Daily fire and weather conditions will dictate whether burning is permissible that day.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The State Water Board [Division of Drinking Water Programs](#) continues to provide 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, approximately \$14.9 million has been committed for specific emergency drinking water projects out of \$15 million appropriated in March 2014 for this purpose, while more funding for this emergency program has been provided by the recent emergency drought appropriation in March.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **Governor Brown Signs \$1 Billion Emergency Drought Package:** On March 27, Gov. Jerry Brown [signed](#) an emergency legislative package that speeds up the disbursement of more than \$1 billion in funding for drought relief and critical water infrastructure projects. The emergency legislation also accelerates emergency food aid, drinking water, water recycling, water conservation, water system modeling, species tracking, infrastructure and flood protection funding.
- **Urban Water Conservation Dips in February:** On April 7, the State Water Board released [urban water conservation](#) data showing Californians reduced water use by just 2.8% in February, compared with the same period in 2013. This February data shows the lowest monthly statewide water savings since local water usage data collection began last July. Since the State Board started collecting water production data last summer, the savings rate is varied throughout California, with some cities and urban areas posting higher savings and others posting lower savings.
- **State Water Board Mandates Outdoor Watering Restrictions Statewide as Drought Worsens:** On March 17, the State Water Board [extended existing emergency water conservation regulations](#) and added a few more in an effort to push residents to conserve even more water as the state enters its fourth year of drought. The State Water Board has mandated urban water agencies to adopt restrictions on outdoor watering and cautioned that it may consider “more significant” actions in the weeks to come.

On April 7, the State Water Board released a fact sheet and proposed regulatory framework for implementing the required [25% reduction in urban water](#) use outlined in the April 1 executive order issued by Gov. Jerry Brown. The State Water Board plans to release a draft Emergency Regulation later this week on April 17, an Emergency Rulemaking Notice on April 28, and will consider approval at a State Board hearing on May 5 or 6.

- **State Board Warns of Imminent Water Right Curtailments across the State:** On April 3, the State Water Board [notified the holders of more than 36,000 water rights](#) across the state, including some senior right holders, that their rights to divert water are likely to be curtailed soon due to California's ongoing drought and record-low snowpack. The warning is designed to give water right holders advance notice to help them make spring planting decisions. The warning is the second one this year; the first was issued in January.

On Monday, April 6, the Executive Director issued a revised Temporary Urgency Change Order (TUCO) covering State and Federal Water Project Operations for April thru June. The TUCO included flow changes to provide minimal relief for migratory fish, reduced Delta outflows, and an intermediate export rate, among other changes.

- **Energy Commission Approves Regulations Requiring Water Efficient Appliances:** On April 8, the California Energy Commission approved [higher water efficiency standards for toilets, urinals and faucets](#) on an emergency basis, as directed in Governor Brown's April 1 Executive Order. The strengthened standards, approved unanimously by the Commission, will reduce water usage by as much as a half for devices sold after January 1, 2016. Officials estimate that these changes will save 10.3 billion gallons of water in the first year, as well as 30.6 million therms of natural gas and 218 gigawatt hours of electricity. Over 10 years, water savings could total an estimated 730 billion gallons or 3.1 million acre feet.
- **Caltrans Continues Pursuing 50 Percent Water Reduction, Backs Irrigation Limits:** On April 2, Caltrans [announced](#) that the California Transportation Commission allocated emergency funding to continue installing smart sprinklers on state property. This technology automatically adjusts to weather conditions, soil moisture or broken pipes, and has already helped cut water use 50 percent where installed by Caltrans.

As one of the State's largest departments, responsible for landscaping that span the size of 22,600 football fields, Caltrans' conservation efforts contribute significant water savings. Conservation efforts have helped the department reduce water consumption by an estimated 30 percent since last year. Caltrans has also cancelled all new landscaping projects that are not legally required.

- **Continued Dry Conditions Force Bureau to Adhere to Low Initial Allocation Estimate:** On March 27, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced that California's continuing dry conditions have forced the Bureau to adhere to its [initial water supply allocation](#) of zero percent for its junior water contractors, since limited water supplies have meant that the Bureau cannot provide full water allocations to its senior water contractors. As the water year progresses, the Bureau will continue to monitor changes to hydrology and opportunities to exercise operational flexibility of the Central Valley Project that could change the allocation.

- **Emergency Food Aid, Rental, and Utility Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided to date over 581,000 boxes of food to community food banks in drought-impacted counties. Approximately 532,000 boxes of food have been picked up by 279,497 households. By Friday, April 17, an additional 10,800 boxes will be delivered to four counties. Local food banks continue to target food aid to residents most impacted by 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, April 2, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reported that a total of \$8,650,130 is committed; and \$7,487,663 in funds has been issued to 4,534 applicants in 21 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 \(DWAP\)](#) pilot project which provides financial assistance to help low-income families pay their water bills. This program targets low-income families in 10 counties identified as experiencing a high unemployment rate, high share of agricultural workers and designated to have “exceptional” drought conditions according to the U.S. Drought Monitor Classification System. These counties are Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Stanislaus and Tulare. Services under this allocation for DWAP resumed April 1, 2015, due to additional funding provided by the recent emergency drought appropriation this past March.

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 has been provided in coordination with the California Human Development (CHD), Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC), and Center for Employment Training (CET) and Proteus, which provides employment training and placement services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers suffering job loss or reduced employment due to the drought. CSD is finalizing contract terms with these organizations and anticipates services to begin June 1, 2015.

- **California’s Water Conservation Education Program Kicks off New Campaign:** A day after Governor Jerry Brown’s historic drought executive order including mandatory water conservation, Save Our Water [launched](#) “Keep Saving CA,” a statewide public education campaign that gives Californians a pat on the back for their water-saving efforts to date – and asks them to do more. Save Our Water is a partnership between the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and the Department of Water Resources. The Keep Saving CA campaign will run through the end of June and includes billboards, outdoor media, traditional and digital radio, digital and social media, and on-the-street efforts that will be seen and heard throughout the state. The campaign includes a robust new website loaded with easy-to-use water-saving tips at saveourwater.com. Save Our Water connects with Californians on its [Facebook](#) page, [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.
- **Current and Past California Droughts Detailed in New DWR Report:** On Wednesday, March 25, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) released a new report, “California’s Most Significant Droughts: Comparing Historical and Recent Conditions,” which [compares the severity and impacts of California’s most significant droughts](#), including the current drought which began in 2012.

- **CDFW Releases Report on the Impacts of Marijuana Cultivation on Fish:** On Thursday, March 26, the Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) released a new report titled, “Impacts of Surface Water Diversions for Marijuana Cultivation on Aquatic Habitat in Four Northwestern California Watersheds,” which [illustrates the devastating effect of marijuana cultivation](#) on state and federally listed salmon and steelhead trout. The report identifies negative impacts such as water pollution, loss of habitat and reduced flows due to surface water diversion.
- **PPIC Launches Water Policy Center, Releases New Set of Reports Focused on Water Challenges:** On Wednesday, April 1, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) launched a new [water policy center](#) that will provide objective scientific research and explore water policy topics in an effort to find solutions to California’s most pressing water challenges. The center will focus on three critical, interrelated, water management challenges facing California which include ensuring clean and reliable water supplies, building healthy resilient ecosystems; and preparing for droughts and floods.
- **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, \$236 million has been expended, 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. In the event drought conditions continue through next year, the proposed 2015-16 Governor’s Budget includes an additional \$115 million to continue critical drought response efforts.

- **Governor’s Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 54 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **24 Counties:** El Dorado, Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Plumas, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.
 - **9 Cities:** City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Montague (Siskiyou 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), and City of West Sacramento (Yolo County), and City of Willits (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.
- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 29 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, 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 4 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Yurok Tribe (Humboldt Counties) and Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County), and Kashia Band of Pomo Indians (Sonoma 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: www.sba.gov/disaster