



Drought Update

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **Governor Brown Declares State of Emergency in Lake and Napa Counties:** On September 13, Governor Brown [issued](#) an emergency proclamation for Lake and Napa counties due to the effects of the Valley Fire. Due to severe drought conditions and extreme weather, the State's risk of wildfires have increased, caused millions of trees to die, and elevated the severity and spread of the fires throughout the State.
- **DWR Releases Draft Guidelines for Groundwater Planning Grants:** On September 4, the Department of Water Resources [announced](#) the release of its draft guidelines for the 2015 [Sustainable Groundwater Planning Grant Program](#), a \$10 million program to help counties with stressed groundwater basins to develop or strengthen local ordinances and conservation plans. DWR will hold meetings in Fresno, Riverside, and Santa Rosa to review and obtain public comments on the draft guidelines. The public comment period on the draft guidelines is open until October 5.
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Public Comment Period Opens on Cal WaterFix:** On September 9, the 30-day formal public comment period [opened](#) on [California WaterFix](#), a project that seeks to modernize the way water is diverted from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. More information is available from the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#). The last day for comments is October 9.
- **Drought Could Continue Despite El Niño:** On September 10, the National Weather Service's (NWS) Climate Prediction Center [issued](#) its monthly report stating an approximate 95% chance that El Niño will continue through the Northern Hemisphere this winter and gradually weaken through spring 2016. According to the State Climatologist, a changing climate makes historical weather data less comparable, so the effects of El Niño on California's main water supplies remain uncertain. Californians should continue to use water sparingly in the face of the ongoing extreme drought. The NWS report is available [here](#).
- **California's Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** This past week, Save Our Water partnered with [EnergyUpgradeCA](#) on a [blog post](#) connecting energy conservation with saving water. Additionally, Media Planet launched their [Water Conservation information campaign](#). The campaign features facts, figures and tips from the Department of Water Resources, Save Our Water, and the California Urban Water Conservation Council.

On September 14, Save Our Water launched their new "Fit It for Good" campaign with radios ads, promotion on the Save Our Water website, and a landscape event at the State Capitol. For more tips and tools to help conserve water and keep trees healthy during the drought, please visit Save Our Water's website, which is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), or connect with the program on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought. During the September 10 meeting, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced that removal of the 2015 Emergency Drought Barrier Project began on September 8. The barrier will be removed no later than November 15.

ONGOING DROUGHT SUPPORT

- **Emergency Food Aid, Utility and Employment Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP) provides food assistance to affected communities that suffer high levels of unemployment from the drought. To date, over 872,475 boxes have been provided to community food banks in drought-impacted counties, with an average of approximately 13,250 food boxes per week since June 2014. Approximately 786,828 boxes of food have been picked up by 413,742 households.

Food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. Nearly 70% of the food distributions have occurred in the Tulare Basin (Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare). There are 12,000 boxes scheduled for delivery for the week ending September 18 to Fresno, Kern, Riverside, San Joaquin, Tulare, and Ventura 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 \(DWAP\)](#) which provides financial assistance to help low-income families pay their water bills. As of September 4, CSD has reported that a total of \$412,361 has been issued to 2,067 households.

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 provides employment training and placement services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers suffering job loss or reduced employment due to the drought. To date, CSD has reported that a total of \$10,843 has been issued to the Center for Employment Training, California Human Development, Central Valley Opportunity Center, and Proteus with 25 participants enrolled.

In response to California's historic drought, CSD has received \$7.5 million in General Fund to implement the Drought Emergency Assistance Program (DEAP) to provide emergency relief and support services to drought-impacted individuals and their families and households. As of September 4, CSD has reported that a total of \$454,710 has been issued to 452 households.

- **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, \$468 million has been committed, 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.

As a result of continuing drought conditions, emergency legislation was enacted in March 2015 that appropriated over \$1 billion of additional funds for drought-related projects and activities. The Administration's May Revision proposal includes an additional \$2.2 billion for programs that protect and expand local water supplies, improve water conservation, and provide immediate relief to impacted communities.

CURRENT DROUGHT CONDITIONS

- **Fire Activity:** Since the beginning of the year, firefighters from CAL FIRE and the US Forest Service have responded to over 6,783 wildfires across the state, burning 545,161 acres. Fire activity across California remains high with nearly 142 combined wildfires in just the past week.
- **CAL FIRE Suspends Outdoor Residential Burning:** California's increased fire activity this year, coupled with record-setting drought conditions, has caused CAL FIRE to [suspend burn permits](#) in all counties in the State Responsibility Area.
- **Dry Well Reports:** With California in its fourth year of a severe, hot drought, the Governor's Drought Task Force continues to monitor and identify communities and local water systems in danger of running out of water. Recently, a cross-agency team, led by DWR, developed a new system that improves and streamlines data collection and reporting for [household water shortages](#) for California water systems with fewer than 15 household connections.

As of September 9, approximately 2,377 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, which affects an estimated 11,885 residents. Cal OES has reported that 2,230 of the 2,377 dry wells are concentrated in the inland regions within the Central Valley. If you are experiencing a water supply shortage, please [submit a report](#) on DWR's website.

- **Vulnerable Water Systems:** The State Water Board continues to provide technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages, and is monitoring water systems across the state. Since January 2014, 94 out of the 127 projects approved to receive emergency funding for interim replacement drinking water have been executed. On May 19, the State Water Board adopted Guidelines for administering the latest emergency drought appropriations of \$19 million announced this past March. To date, the State Water Board has received requests for \$3.7 million of those funds.
- **Projected Reservoir Management:** Shasta Reservoir recorded 1,719,119 acre-feet (AF) on September 10 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 4,913 AF/day. Releases are being held lower than normal to keep cold water in the reservoir for Winter Run Chinook Salmon later in the fall. Shasta Reservoir is projected to reach 1,460,000 AF by the end of September. This is higher than the 1976-77 record low storage of 700,000 AF.

Oroville Reservoir recorded 1,058,242 AF on September 10 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 774 AF/day. Releases are low for water supply conservation but are moderated to keep salt water from coming too far into the Delta and to meet other joint Federal-State obligations. Oroville Reservoir is projected to reach 900,000 AF by the end of September. This storage is about the same as the record low 1976-77 storage level.

Folsom Reservoir recorded 187,950 AF on September 10 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 256 AF/day. Releases are low for water supply conservation but are moderated to keep salt water from coming too far into the Delta and to meet other joint Federal-State obligations. Folsom Reservoir is projected to reach 120,000 AF by the end of September. This is lower than the 1976-77 record low storage of 150,000 AF.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of September 14 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 34% of capacity (43% of year to date average); Don Pedro 32% of capacity (46% of average); Exchequer 9% of capacity (18% of average); Folsom Lake 19% of capacity (32% of average); Lake Oroville 30% of capacity (47% of average); Lake Perris 36% (47% of average); Millerton Lake 33% of capacity (78% of average); New Melones 12% of capacity (21% of average); Pine Flat 12% of capacity (34% of average); San Luis 21% of capacity (47% of average); Lake Shasta 37% of capacity (60% of average); and Trinity Lake 25% of capacity (35% of average). An update of water levels at other [smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

- **Weather Outlook:** In the Valleys, expect additional cooling throughout the week with a chance of rain at times, mainly over the mountains. Temperatures will be below normal through the first half of the week in the Bay Area with a chance of rain. Dry and warmer weather will return by Thursday through the weekend. In the Southern region, cloudy skies and a chance of rain are expected through Tuesday. Clearing and less humid conditions are forecast Wednesday.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 60 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **27 Counties:** Butte, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Plumas, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne and Yuba.
 - **12 Cities:** City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Manteca (San Joaquin County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Porterville (Tulare 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), City of Rancho Cucamonga (San Bernardino 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.

ACWA [released](#) a Drought Response Toolkit to assist water agencies as they take action to meet state-mandated water conservation target and communicate information about water use restrictions, enforcement and other issues with their customers, media and other audiences.

- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 33 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Humboldt, 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, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Solano, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 7 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Hopland Tribe (Mendocino County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou County), La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians (San Diego County), Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County), Trinidad Tribe (Humboldt County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt and Del Norte 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