



## Drought Update

### Wednesday, September 23, 2015

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#### **KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK**

- **Governor Brown Requests Presidential Major Disaster Declarations for Valley and Butte Fire Recovery Efforts:** On September 21, Governor Brown [requested](#) a Presidential major disaster declaration for the state following the Valley Fire and Butte Fire, which have scorched more than 145,000 acres, taken lives and destroyed thousands of homes and structures. A Presidential Major Disaster Declaration triggers the release of federal funds to support fire victims and supplement ongoing state and local disaster recovery efforts. The Governor's request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for the Valley Fire can be found [here](#) and the request for the Butte Fire can be found [here](#).
- **Water Now Available for Diversion by Senior Water Right Holders on the Sacramento, Feather River and Delta:** On September 17, the State Water Board [notified](#) and lifted curtailments for pre-1914 water rights holders with a priority date of 1903 or later in the Sacramento, Feather River watersheds, and the Delta. The State Water Board will continue to monitor weather forecasts and stream gauges, and will notify water rights holders if there are any changes in water availability. For more information, visit the State Water Board's [Watershed Analysis](#).
- **DWR Hosted a Public Scoping Meeting on Proposition 1 IRWM Grant Program:** On September 18, the Department of Water Resources [held](#) a public scoping meeting to seek public input on the development of the [Proposition 1](#) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grant Program and its solicitation process. Prop 1 allocates \$510 million in IRWM funding for implementation and planning efforts in every hydrologic region of the state and dedicates a portion of the funding to assist disadvantaged communities. For more information, visit DWR's [IRWM Grant Programs](#).
- **Final Infrastructure Funding Fair Opens in Sacramento:** On September 23, the State Water Board, in partnership with five other agencies, will [host](#) the year's final California Financing Coordinating Funding (CFCC) Fair in Sacramento. The CFCC funding fair allows public works and local government representatives to obtain information on funding available for California infrastructure projects which include, but not limited to: drinking water, water quality, and water supply and conservation.
- **Tree-Ring Study Finds Sierra Snowpack Lowest in 500 Years:** On September 14, the publication Nature Climate Change [released](#) a study that indicates this spring's Sierra snowpack was the lowest in 500 years. Scientists based their finding of the 500-year low on an examination of a previous study that analyzed the tree rings of 1,505 blue oak trees near the Sierra mountains. Several scientists report that the snowpack study underscores the extreme severity of California's drought.

- **California’s Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** This past week, Save Our Water launched the [“Fix It for Good”](#) campaign at a turf replacement project demonstration event at the State Capitol and [partnered](#) with the [California Native Plant Society](#) to educate Californians about the importance of landscaping with California native plants to help save water. Shock Top’s [“Shock the Drought”](#) campaign continues to generate earned media for Save Our Water with more news stories and a BuzzFeed article generating press.

Sacramento’s music festival, [TBD Fest](#), has joined the Save Our Water effort by featuring a [Save Our Water music playlist](#) of “5-minute (or less) shower songs” on Spotify to encourage Californians to take short showers. Save Our Water also partnered with Green Acres, a Sacramento-area nursery, to feature drought-tolerant (California-friendly) plants at the festival and “Fix it for Good” posters and art at all its locations. 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 17 meeting, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), along with various state agencies, provided a detailed summary of the active wildfires across the state. In addition, the Task Force announced that the next regional Drought Task Force meeting would be held on September 28 in Bakersfield.

## **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 886,720 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 795,982 boxes of food have been picked up by 418,582 households.

Food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. Nearly 62% 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 25 to Fresno, Kern, Kings, Riverside, San Joaquin, and Tulare 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 11, CSD has reported that a total of \$430,208 has been issued to 2,154 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 11, CSD has reported that a total of \$604,516 has been issued to 596 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 7,042 wildfires across the state, burning 657,281 acres. Fire activity across California remains high with nearly 259 combined wildfires in just the past week.

As of September 21, the Valley Fire in Lake, Napa, and Sonoma County remains the largest in the state burning more than 75,781 acres with 70% containment. The Butte Fire in Amador and Calaveras County is currently at 70,760 acres with 74% containment. The most recent Tassajara Fire in Monterey County is currently at 1,086 acres with 30% containment.

- **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 16, approximately 2,400 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, which affects an estimated 11,990 residents. Cal OES has reported that 2,253 of the 2,400 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, 95 out of the 129 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 \$4.6 million of those funds.
- **Projected Reservoir Management:** Shasta Reservoir recorded 1,671,078 acre-feet (AF) on September 17 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 4,804 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 1,053,982 AF on September 17 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 426 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 184,086 AF on September 17 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 386 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 20 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 38% of capacity (47% 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 37% (48% of average); Millerton Lake 35% of capacity (84% of average); New Melones 12% of capacity (20% of average); Pine Flat 12% of capacity (34% of average); San Luis 20% of capacity (45% of average); Lake Shasta 36% of capacity (60% of average); and Trinity Lake 24% of capacity (34% of average). An update of water levels at other [smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

- **Weather Outlook:** Valley conditions are expected to remain dry throughout the state over the next few days. Light to moderate precipitation is expected in Southern California beginning Monday and continuing through Thursday.

## **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](http://www.sba.gov/disaster)