

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

JULY 25, 2022

Current Conditions

- California and much of the Western U.S. is immersed in a third consecutive year of extreme drought. This is also the third statewide drought declared in California during this century (2007-2009, 2012-2016, 2020 – present).
- January, February, and March 2022 were the driest on record dating back over 100 years, with just six inches of precipitation observed across the Sierra Nevada.
- California entered the dry summer months with below-average reservoir storage and with the state's largest reservoir, Shasta Lake, at critically low levels. The Sierra snowpack is essentially gone, and runoff into the state's streams and reservoirs has largely peaked for the year.
- Hot and dry conditions are expected to continue through November indicating a late start to water year 2023 extending fire season and setting the stage for dry watersheds under any snowpack that forms in winter. The current outlook for water year 2023 is another year of drought as the third consecutive winter with La Nina conditions is expected.
- The State is taking action to prepare for the possibility of a fourth dry year.
- All of California's 58 counties are under a drought emergency proclamation. 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 July 25, the state's voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 175 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most are in Fresno, Madera, Butte, Tehama, and Tulare counties.

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.

Recent Events and State Actions

Water Plan focus on equity (July 21): The third convening of the California Water Plan Policy Advisory Committee focused on equity in water resource management, with an emphasis on how the Water Plan Update 2023 can help improve equity through data, analysis, and recommendations.

Water Board funding assistance tops \$3 billion in the past year (July 20): The State Water Board provided an historic \$3.3 billion in financial assistance during the past fiscal year to water systems and communities for projects that bolster water resilience, respond to drought emergencies and expand access to safe drinking water. The State Water Board's funding to communities this past fiscal year doubled compared to 2020-21, and it is four times the amount of assistance provided just two years ago. The marked increase comes in part as a result of last year's \$5.2 billion three-year investment in drought response and water resilience by Governor Newsom and the Legislature and significant federal dollars invested through the state revolving funds. About 90% of the assistance provided this fiscal year took the form of loans to major water-resilience and drinking water projects.

Water Commission discusses extended drought (July 20): The California Water Commission hosted experts to explore California droughts of the past, present, and future. Dr. John Abatzoglou, an engineering professor at UC Merced, discussed how climate projections clearly point to increasing temperature and evaporative demand, which will make it harder for the state to emerge from drought. Dr. Ellen Hanak, director of the Water Policy Center at the Public Policy Institute of California, discussed how adaptation will require changes in the way we track water use, forecast water availability, manage scarce supplies during drought, and take advantage of opportunities to store more water in wet years.



State Water Board readopts Delta emergency regulations (July 20): The Board readopted the [emergency regulation](#) to curtail unauthorized water diversions in the Delta watershed. The emergency regulation will now go to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) for approval. This typically takes two weeks. The emergency regulation will go into effect the same day it's approved by OAL. More information is available at the Board's [Delta Drought Website](#).

Workshop on business water efficiency practices (July 19): DWR hosted a virtual public workshop to solicit input on water use efficiency practices for commercial, industrial, and institutional conservation programs. The input will help shape turf conversion programs and technical assistance.

Rice growers encouraged to help create wetlands (ongoing): CDFW and DWR sent postcards this week notifying rice growers of CDFW's Winter Rice Habitat Incentive Program and DWR's Drought Relief Waterbird Program. The application period opens in August. The programs are designed to continue and further encourage the winter flooding of harvested rice fields, which provide a significant portion of the caloric needs of ducks and migrating shorebirds in the Sacramento Valley.



Recent Events and State Actions



Curtailments adjustments (ongoing): As drought conditions persist, the State Water Board continues to monitor six critical watersheds where worsening conditions may threaten water supplies. Curtailments remain in effect in the Delta watershed, the Russian River watershed, and the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds. Curtailments are suspended for the Mill Creek and Deer Creek watersheds (sub-watersheds of the Delta). Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change. Water right holders should closely monitor the watershed webpages and their email for curtailment updates.

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, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.
- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Madera, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Yuba and Colusa County community meetings: On **July 25** in Yuba City with local elected officials, the CDFA secretary and undersecretary will participate in listening sessions to hear about local community drought impacts and the needs of farmworkers and other farm employees.

Environmentalists briefed on drought: State leaders update environmental group representatives **July 27** on latest drought conditions and state response actions.

Water conservation discussion with Governor: Leaders of large public and private water suppliers and water industry associations reconvene with the Governor on **July 29** to discuss progress toward achieving a 15% reduction in water use statewide, compared to 2020, and earlier reporting of water use data by water suppliers to the State Water Board.

Caltrans freeway signs urge water savings: Caltrans is scheduled to post drought and water conservation messages on its freeway signs from **July 29** through **August 1**.

Temporary closure at Portola Redwoods State Park: California State Parks will temporarily close campground facilities beginning on **August 5** at Portola Redwoods State Park. The closure is due to lower water flows in Peters Creek. In the past campgrounds at Portola Redwoods have temporarily closed during droughts as the park's primary water source, Peter's Creek, can run very low. This occurred in 2014, 2015 and 2021.

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/>