



CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

NOVEMBER 28, 2022

Current Conditions

- The state's new water year began October 1, and with it came fresh concerns about a fourth year of extreme drought. The three-year period from 2020 to 2022 is now the driest on record going back to 1896.
- Despite some rain and mountain snowfall recorded in early November, uncertainty remains about what the new water year may bring. Long-range forecasting suggests warmer and drier-than-average conditions will persist.
- To replace and replenish the water that thirstier soils, vegetation, and the atmosphere will consume under hotter and drier conditions, Governor Newsom announced "[California's Water Supply Strategy, Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future](#)" with actions to recycle, de-salt and conserve more water and expand water storage capacity.
- 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 November 28, the state's [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 34 dry wells in the past 30 days.

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 <https://drought.ca.gov>. For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit www.saveourwater.com.

Recent Events and State Actions

\$85 million announced for local water resilience grants (Nov. 29):

Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced it has awarded \$85 million in financial assistance to meet the immediate and long-term water needs for millions of Californians in local communities small and large. Of the \$85 million, \$43 million will provide financial assistance to small communities struggling to address drought impacts as part of the [Small Community Drought Relief Program](#). These communities serve fewer than 3,000 connections and are most vulnerable to water supply issues due to aging infrastructure and dry wells.



Federal agreement and funding for Salton Sea announced (Nov. 28):

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) [announced an agreement](#) to stabilize the shrinking Salton Sea and enable urgent water conservation to protect reservoir storage volumes along the Colorado River amid extreme climate change-driven drought conditions. The agreement, which will be considered by the IID Board of Directors at a special meeting on Nov. 29, secures a \$250 million commitment of funds from the Bureau of Reclamation as well as commitments from the Bureau, IID and CVWD to develop programmatic land access agreements and other measures to enable expedited implementation of Salton Sea Management Program projects.



Release of Annual Water Shortage & Demand Assessment Report (Nov.28): DWR submitted the first annual report to State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) summarizing its review of urban water suppliers' Annual Water Shortage Assessment Reports. The summary report is just one component of actions required under the [2018 Making Water Conservation a Way of Life](#) legislation to improve long-term water conservation. It will require 435 urban water suppliers (those who serve more than 3,000 connections or deliver more than 3,000 acre-feet) to submit to DWR assessments of their supply and demand for the coming year under the assumption that it will be dry.

Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Program Guidelines released (Nov.28):

The Department of Conservation released Draft Round 2 [Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Program](#) Guidelines for public comment. The DOC intends to award approximately \$38 million in grants to reduce groundwater reliance and create local environmental and economic opportunities through multi-benefit land-use changes via this solicitation.



Recent Events and State Actions

Coastal Commission approves Monterey County desalination plant (Nov. 18): The Coastal Commission approved an application from the California American Water Company (Cal Am) to operate an ocean water desalination plant in Monterey County with an initial capacity to produce 4.8 million gallons per day to serve communities of the Monterey Peninsula. The plant is intended to diversify the region's water sources. The State Water Board first ordered that Cal Am find new water sources in 1995 and issued a cease-and-desist order in 2009 that required Cal Am to reduce its diversions from the Carmel River. The company's rights to the Seaside groundwater basin have also been curtailed.

Santa Monica Sustainable Water Infrastructure Project ribbon cutting (Nov. 17): State Water Board Member Nichole Morgan attended a ribbon cutting for Santa Monica's Sustainable Water Infrastructure Project, an innovative stormwater capture project that will provide a drought-resilient water supply for the city. The project received \$8.7 million in Prop 1 funding from the Water Board's Division of Financial Assistance.



PPIC water conference (Nov. 18): The State Water Board chair and the DWR director participated in a Public Policy Institute of California conference panel entitled "Finding Balance: Policy's Role in Adapting to Extremes." The day-long conference also included panel discussions about water supply strategies for wet and dry years and the latest climate science.

Delta Conservancy approves grants (Nov. 16): The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Board approved dozens of new drought-related projects, totaling up to \$10.8 million, and paved the way for an additional \$42 million for multi-benefit projects in the Delta. The Board unanimously approved 64 Delta Drought Response Pilot Program projects for water year 2023. The program aims to reduce drought stress in the Delta watershed by incentivizing agricultural water users to incorporate practices into their operations that conserve water, protect water quality, promote soil health, and mitigate drought impacts on native fish and birds. In addition, the Board approved draft solicitation notices for \$42 million in funding opportunities for multi-benefit projects that advance the state's initiatives to build climate resilience, expand outdoor access for all, and advance California's work to conserve and protect 30 percent of the state's land and coastal waters by 2030.



Curtailments adjustments (ongoing): 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 Scott River and Shasta River watersheds, Mill Creek and Deer Creek watersheds (sub-watersheds of the Delta). As of Nov. 5, curtailments have been lifted in the Russian River watershed. Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change. Water rights holders should closely monitor their email and the [watershed drought webpages](#) 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, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.
- **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

State water leaders and Save Our Water at annual Association of California Water Agencies

(ACWA) conference: At the 2022 ACWA Fall conference on **Nov. 29 – Dec. 1**, leadership and staff from the State Water Board, DWR, and CNRA, will attend the ACWA Fall Conference in Indian Wells. They are participating on panels addressing many topics including the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund and California's Water Supply Strategy. The Save Our Water team will also host a booth and will share water conservation and drought messaging. ACWA is the largest statewide coalition of public water agencies in the country with more than 460 public agency members collectively who are responsible for 90% of the water delivered to cities, farms and businesses in California.

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://sgma.water.ca.gov/CalGWLIVE/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://drought.ca.gov/>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>