

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

OCTOBER 17, 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.
- Hot and dry conditions are expected to continue through November, and the State is taking action to prepare for a fourth dry year.
- 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 October 17, the state's voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 115 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most are in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys.

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

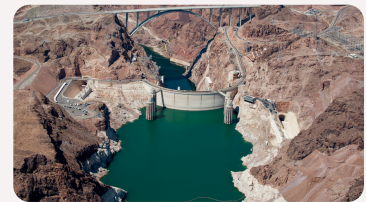
DWR hosts drought-to-flood symposium (October 17): DWR hosted the “Drought to Flood Symposium: Building Resilience for California's Climate Extremes” at the California Natural Resources Agency headquarters in Sacramento. The state climatologist and experts from academia and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers discussed climate change extremes and how we need to prepare for flooding even during a drought.



Coastal Commission advances desalination project (October 13): The Coastal Commission approved a coastal development permit for the Doheny Ocean Desalination Project, which will provide 5 million gallons a day of supply to San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano, Dana Point, and other south Orange County communities supplied by the South Coast Water District. Underground infrastructure, including slant wells, will be built on a 6-acre campground at Doheny State Beach. The project is supported by State Parks and the Department of Water Resources.



Federal funding for Colorado River conservation announced (October 12): The U.S. Department of the Interior announced new drought mitigation funding opportunities to improve and protect the long-term sustainability of the Colorado River System. The Bureau of Reclamation will manage the grant program, soliciting proposals from Colorado River water delivery contract or entitlement holders for projects that mitigate drought, protect important natural resources, and ensure a reliable source of water and power for the millions of people who depend upon Lake Mead and Lake Powell. Two of the three program components are open for proposal submissions from October 12 to November 21 and require confirmation of water conservation and system benefits. For the first component, eligible applicants may submit proposals for system conservation resulting in water remaining in Lake Mead at a set price ranging from \$330 per acre-foot for one-year agreements to \$400 per acre-foot for three-year agreements. A second component of the program will accept proposals for additional water conservation and efficiency projects that could involve a variety of pricing options. The third component allows for proposals to be submitted in early 2023 for long-term system efficiency improvements that will result in multi-year system conservation.



Drought stakeholder briefing (October 12): The secretaries for the Natural Resources Agency, CalEPA, and Department of Food and Agriculture briefed more than 120 stakeholders on the water resilience investments in the 2022-23 budget, recently enacted water legislation, drought response activities, and implementation of the Governor’s Water Supply Strategy.

Recent Events and State Actions

Save Our Water research (ongoing): DWR and the new state Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications are conducting research focus groups in October to help guide the messaging and direction for the next phase of the water conservation campaign. The paid media campaign continues this fall with drought urgency messaging and water savings tips for all communities. Special emphasis is being placed on lawn transformation during the fall.

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](#), [Russian River watershed](#), and the [Scott River and Shasta River watersheds](#). As of October 15, curtailments have been reinstated for the [Mill Creek and Deer Creek watersheds](#) (sub-watersheds of the Delta) but curtailments in the larger Delta watershed may apply. Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change. Water right 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 Board to consider water loss regulations: The State Water Board on **October 19** will consider a rule establishing water loss performance standards for urban retail water suppliers as required by SB 555, enacted in 2015. The proposed regulation will provide each supplier a unique volumetric standard reflecting cost-effective levels of achievable water loss, given its system and budget, and give each supplier the flexibility to choose its own approach to meeting its standard. In 2019, according to data submitted to the Department of Water Resources, multiple suppliers were losing over 100 gallons per connection per day and total statewide losses were 261,000 acre-feet.

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