

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

OCTOBER 24, 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 24, the state's voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 90 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 prepares residents for flood risks during drought (October 22 – 30):

DWR is marking Flood Preparedness Week (October 22 through October 30) by reminding Californians that climate-driven weather extremes mean flooding can happen any time of year, even during a drought. More than 7 million California residents are at risk of flooding, and many don't realize it. To bolster preparations, DWR awarded over \$50.4 million to communities across the state for flood risk reduction projects and \$26.5 million in funding from DWR's Coastal Watershed Flood Risk Reduction program.



Save Our Water press event in Folsom (October 20): State Water Board Member Nichole Morgan, Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot, and Folsom Mayor Kerri Howell joined Regional Water Authority officials to highlight a local business that transformed its landscape with low-water plants and more ecologically friendly features that protect the American River. The drought-tolerant renovation inspired nearby businesses to take similar action. The state and local officials urged homeowners and business owners to take advantage of water district rebates to permanently cut back on outdoor water use.



Save Our Water hosts exchange of water conservation ideas (October 19): Save Our Water partnered with local water agencies to host a webinar attended by more than 300 water professionals at which Alameda County Water District, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, California Water Services, and the Regional Water Authority leaders described their experiences in helping their customers conserve. The presentations elicited many questions and ideas from water district staff.

State Water Board adopts water loss regulations (October 19): The State Water Board adopted a rule establishing water loss performance standards for urban retail water suppliers, as required by SB 555 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.

Conservation improves slightly in September (October 18): The State Water Board reported that so far, with data representing about 65% of the state's population, Californians used about 11% less water in September 2022 compared to September 2020. Statewide in August 2022, compared to August 2020, Californians used 10.5 % less water. Final September 2022 conservation numbers will be reported by the Board in mid-November.

Recent Events and State Actions

Results of Delta temporary urgency change petition study (October 18):

The Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation presented the findings of a special study on the effects of the Delta Temporary Urgency Change Petition Reconsideration Order (TUCP Order) and emergency drought barrier on the prevalence and extent of harmful algal blooms and expansion of invasive aquatic weeds in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The study was a requirement of the 2021 and 2022 TUCP Orders. The report found no impact of the TUCP on harmful algal blooms or weeds in the Delta, but the emergency drought barrier was most likely a contributing factor in a localized *Microcystis* bloom in Franks Tract. Human impacts of these effects were difficult to fully assess, but likely small. There is a clear need for a larger, multi-agency collaborative monitoring program to assess the impacts of harmful algal blooms beyond the effects of water project management.



Federal funding for California water storage projects (October 17): The Biden-Harris Administration announced awarding \$210 million in federal grants from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to drought-resilience projects across the West, including:



- \$25 million for the project to raise B.F. Sisk dam and expand San Luis Reservoir in Merced County, which could provide an additional 130,000 acre-feet of storage.
- \$30 million to help develop a 1.5 million acre-foot-capacity reservoir in the Coast Range foothills near Maxwell. The off-stream reservoir would hold water delivered from the Sacramento River via canals and a new pipeline.
- \$82 million to help integrate approximately 115,000 acre-feet of additional storage from an expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir in Contra Costa County with existing systems to divert, store, and deliver Delta water supplies.

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](#), and [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 their email and the [watershed drought webpages](#) for curtailment updates.



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.

Recent Events and State Actions

Colorado River discussion continue (ongoing): Leaders of California water districts that depend upon the Colorado River continue to discuss water use reductions they can make to help stabilize storage levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Both reservoirs – the biggest in the U.S. – are at risk of reaching levels too low to allow water deliveries and power generation. Negotiations also continue among California interests with Arizona and Nevada water users. At the same time, California continues work on an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to protect the Salton Sea, which would further recede as a result of additional conservation of Colorado River water.

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.

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/>