



December 13, 2021

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.

Current Conditions

- The water year that ended Sept. 30 was the second driest on record. All of California’s 58 counties are now under a drought emergency proclamation.
- After two dry years, reservoir storage is markedly below 2019 levels, underscoring the need for ongoing water conservation.
- 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 Dec. 12, the state’s [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 18 dry wells in the past 30 days, a decrease of 86 percent from the previous 30 days. Dry wells were reported primarily in Fresno, Madera and San Luis Obispo counties.
- The state is providing hauled or bottled water to eight separate small water providers experiencing supply outages in Monterey, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Tulare, Shasta, El Dorado and Los Angeles counties. The providers together serve a population of a little under 3,000 people.

Recent Events and State Actions

Drought relief funding for small water systems (Dec. 6): DWR announced \$26 million in funding commitments to 11 communities to implement projects that invest in long-term solutions such as providing reliable water supply sources, improving water system storage, replacing aging infrastructure and arranging alternative power sources. The commitments represent the fifth round of funding in the \$200 million Small Community Drought Relief program. Since August, 48 projects have been awarded a total of \$92 million. The latest round of funding will support projects in 10 counties: Fresno, Merced, Lake, Yuba, Marin, Siskiyou, Tuolumne, Mariposa, San Luis Obispo and Kings. Of the awarded projects, four will benefit severely disadvantaged and underrepresented communities.



Recipients include Kettleman City Community Services District in Kings County, which will be getting emergency water supplies and \$2.1 million to rehabilitate a well and construct a new well.

October sees boost in water conservation rates (Dec. 7): Californians saved significantly more water in October, compared to the same month in 2020, than they did in August or September, according to information presented by State Water Board staff. With 86 percent of urban water suppliers submitting data, the State Water Board reported a 13.2 percent decrease in water use in October 2021 relative to October 2020. Notable October savings include the North Coast region (22 percent), North Lahontan region (20 percent), Sacramento River region (19 percent), and San Francisco region (18 percent). These regions exceeded the 15 percent voluntary reduction requested by Governor Gavin Newsom in July. The savings rate in the South Coast region, home half the state's population, was 11.9 percent, an improvement from 3.9 percent in September.

Salmon hatcheries (ongoing): For the second year in a row, adult fall-run Chinook salmon return to the Mokelumne River is trending at or near a historic low. In response, starting Dec. 1, CDFW is transferring up to 1.6 million fall-run salmon eggs from the Nimbus Fish Hatchery to the Mokelumne hatchery. Fish produced from transferred eggs will be used to enhance production and will be released at approved sites including Santa Cruz, Pillar Point, Monterey, and Fort Baker. This approach maximizes recruitment to the ocean commercial fishery, thereby minimizing the potential for these fish to stray as adults.

Curtailment adjustments in several watersheds (ongoing): The State Water Board has reimposed curtailments for several sub-watersheds in the Sacramento and Scott rivers. Curtailments were suspended in the watersheds following the October atmospheric river event. With below-average precipitation in November, water demand now exceeds supply in some tributary watersheds of the Sacramento. Flows in the Scott are below the emergency target of 150 cubic feet per second recommended by the Department of Fish and Wildlife and incorporated into the State Water Board's emergency regulation. However, more recent precipitation has resulted in increased river flows in northern and central California. On Dec. 13, curtailments were suspended in the Russian River watershed through Jan. 10. Board staff evaluate conditions multiple times a week and will adjust curtailment statuses in additional watersheds as conditions change.

With rain moving in, Save Our Water urges Californians to turn off sprinklers (ongoing): With a major winter storm hitting Northern California, Save Our Water is reminding residents that [now is the time to turn off sprinklers](#) and other outdoor irrigation systems. On average, Californians use 30 percent to 60 percent of their water on outdoor irrigation. Letting Mother Nature do the watering when it rains is an important way to save water. [Check out more tips for saving water](#) when rain is in the forecast.



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.

- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.
- **Water suppliers:** The following public water suppliers have imposed mandatory water use reductions on customers, according to information voluntarily provided to the Association of California Water Agencies and / or recent announcements. The list likely is not comprehensive:
 - Alameda County Water District – mandatory water use restrictions aimed at reducing water use by 15 percent.
 - Brooktrails Community Services District – usage cap of 9,000 gallons per month, all customers
 - Indian Wells Valley Water District – 20 percent
 - Marin Municipal Water District – 40 percent
 - Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Conservation Improvement District – 40 percent
 - Modesto Irrigation District – irrigation allocation capped at 36 inches per acre
 - Montague Water Conservation District – 95 percent
 - Nevada Irrigation District – 20 percent
 - Reclamation District 1500 – 25 percent
 - Richvale Irrigation District – 50 percent
 - City of Santa Rosa – 20 percent
 - Westlands Water District – no outdoor water use by municipal and industrial customers

The following private water companies have imposed a 15 percent mandatory water use reduction:

- San Jose Water Company, with drought surcharges for excessive water use
- Great Oaks Water Company, with drought surcharges for excessive water use
- California-American Water Company (in the Larkfield and Geyersville districts of Sonoma County, with fines for non-essential water use
- Cold Springs Water Company in Tuolumne County
- North Gualala Water Company in Sonoma County

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Delta curtailment methodology workshop: The Water Rights Division of the State Water Board will hold a public workshop **Dec. 15** to consider additional or alternative approaches to its Delta curtailment methodology. Details can be found in the [workshop notice](#).

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/>