



April 8, 2014

To: Nicholas E. Chiulos, Assistant County Administrative Officer
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Re: State Drought Report

2014 Drought: State Efforts

With California facing one of the most severe droughts on record, Governor Brown declared a drought State of Emergency in mid-January and directed state officials to take all necessary actions to prepare for water shortages.

Across state government, action is being taken. The California Department of General Services is leading water conservation efforts at state facilities, and the California Department of Transportation is cutting water usage along California's roadways by 50 percent. Caltrans has also launched a public awareness campaign, putting a water conservation message on their more than 700 electronic highway signs.

The California Department of Public Health identified and offered assistance to communities at risk of severe drinking water shortages and is working with other state and local agencies to develop solutions for vulnerable communities.

CAL FIRE hired additional firefighters and is continuously adjusting staffing throughout the state to help address the increased fire threat due to drought conditions.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture launched a drought website to help farmers, ranchers and farmworkers find resources and assistance programs that may be available to them during the drought.

In February, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture released the California Water Action Plan, which will guide state efforts to enhance water supply reliability, restore damaged and destroyed ecosystems and improve the resilience of our infrastructure.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 20 percent, and the Save Our Water campaign launched four public service announcements encouraging residents to conserve. Last December, the Governor formed a Drought Task Force to review expected water allocations and California's preparedness for water scarcity. In May 2013, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order to direct state water officials to expedite the review and processing of voluntary transfers of water and water rights.

In March, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) created a new toolkit for local governments that provides guidance for coordinating on drought response and meeting the 20% reduction. The toolkit contains a list of regional contacts for the Office of Emergency Services, State Water Board and other water-related state agencies; templates for a proclamation declaring a local drought emergency or a resolution calling for voluntary water conservation; web links to

drought information and resources for local governments; and water-related curricula for grades K-12. The tools were designed with city and counties in mind, and are appropriate for use by water districts.

On April 4th, leaders of the Governor’s Drought Task Force met with local officials from Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito County in Santa Cruz to hear first-hand accounts and direct impacts of the current drought. City and county leaders, water managers and elected officials gathered at the Santa Cruz Police Department to hear directly from each of the Task Force Members – Cal OES Director Mark Ghilarducci; California Natural Resources Agency Secretary John Laird; California Department of Public Health Deputy Director Mark Starr and California Department of Food & Agriculture Undersecretary Sandra Schubert – on the actions the State Government can take to mitigate the impacts of the current drought.

The task force reminded attendees to continue to communicate their specific problems as the year progresses, so state leaders can engage with emergency networks, leverage both levels of government and collaborate for solutions.

Legislation

The Governor, along with Legislative Leadership proposed emergency drought legislation in February that would allocate \$687.4 million for immediate drought aid. Both SB 103 and SB 104 were signed by the Governor on March 1st, and do the following:

Enhancing Water Conservation and Improving Water Supplies

- \$549 million from the accelerated expenditure of voter-approved bonds, Proposition 84 and Proposition 1E, in the form of infrastructure grants for local and regional projects that are already planned or partially completed to increase local reliability, including recapturing of storm water, expand the use and distribution of recycled water, enhance the management and recharging of groundwater storage and strengthen water conservation.
- \$20 million transferred from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for direct expenditures and grants to state and local agencies to improve water use efficiency, save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from state and local water transportation and management systems.
- \$14 million for groundwater management across the state, including assistance to disadvantaged communities with groundwater contamination exacerbated by the drought.
- \$10 million transferred from the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Fund for the California Department of Food and Agriculture to invest in irrigation and water pumping systems that reduce water use, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.
- \$10 million transferred from the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Fund for the DWR to establish a grant program for state and local agencies to implement residential, commercial or institutional water efficiency projects that reduce water and energy use.
- \$15 million from the General Fund for Emergency Drinking Water Fund to address emergency water shortages due to drought.
- \$13 million from the General Fund to augment the California Conservation Corps and local

community conservation corps to expand water use efficiency and conservation activities and to reduce fuel loads to prevent catastrophic fires.

Assisting Californians Disproportionately Impacted by the Drought

- \$25.3 million from the General Fund for food assistance, which will be structured to maximize the potential federal drought assistance that can be provided to provide food assistance to those impacted by the drought.
- \$21 million from the General Fund and federal funds for housing related assistance for individuals impacted by the drought.