



# County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors  
Chambers  
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor  
Salinas, CA 93901

## Board Report

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**File #:** 14-347, **Version:** 1

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- a. Receive a report on the status of drought related impacts in Monterey County and the County of Monterey's water conservation efforts;
- b. Consider adoption of a Resolution encouraging voluntary water conservation efforts in Monterey County; and
- c. Provide direction to staff regarding the establishment of a countywide interagency drought task force.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Receive a report on the status of drought related impacts in Monterey County and the County of Monterey's water conservation efforts;
- b. Consider adoption of a Resolution encouraging voluntary water conservation efforts in Monterey County; and
- c. Provide direction to staff regarding the establishment of a countywide interagency drought task force.

### **SUMMARY:**

This report describes the activities of various County departments in response to the current drought, provides information on the current status of the drought in Monterey County, and describes the County's current and proposed water conservation efforts. It recommends that the Board adopt a resolution encouraging voluntary water conservation by all users countywide. Additionally, staff seeks direction from the Board on next steps for action, including the possible formation of a countywide interagency drought task force, to facilitate information sharing, joint messaging, and effective forecasting and response to the impacts of an extended drought.

### **DISCUSSION:**

On January 17, 2014, with California facing the driest year in recorded history, the Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency, and called upon all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 20%. The Governor also established a State Drought Task Force consisting of key state agencies, led by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), to carry out advanced strategic planning efforts, provide status reports, and to work with counties and others, to identify drought related issues and assistance programs to support those impacted. The Monterey County Office of Emergency Services (OES) participates in weekly State Drought Task Force conference calls. A prolonged drought could have economic and social impacts, and may impact water quality and quantity, food and agriculture, and cause an increased fire risk.

Monterey County is part of the 25% of the State in the most extreme drought condition. The U.S. Drought Monitor has designated almost all of Monterey County as a "D-4 Exceptional Drought" region, the most severe designation possible, a small portion of the County's coastline is designated as "D-3 Extreme Drought". The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared 54 counties, including Monterey County, as primary natural disaster areas due to drought, which makes emergency loans available to ranchers and farmers.

In response to the State emergency, the County Administrative Office-Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs Division (CAO-IGLA) has convened a staff level internal drought task force which includes

representatives from the following departments: CAO-IGLA, Office of Emergency Services (OES), Water Resources Agency (WRA), Health, Resource Management Agency (RMA), Parks, Social Services, and Agricultural Commissioner. The San Francisco-Monterey Bay office of the National Weather Service and the County Fire Warden are also contributing partners. To date the task force has been focused on sharing information on current and potential drought impacts, anticipating County program and service needs, and providing information and resource tools to the public related to programs, services and conservation. One of the tools developed is a webpage entitled; *Drought 2014: Making conservation a Monterey County way of life*, ([www.co.monterey.ca.us/drought](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/drought) <<http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/drought>>) which is dedicated to providing information regarding the impacts of the drought, and water conservation information for County employees, businesses and citizens. The webpage also provides important links to various state and federal resource sites to connect users with drought status information, grant availability, and to provide tools for local governments.

Information on the current Monterey County drought status and current and planned County conservation measures are attached to this report (Exhibit A). Reports on state and federal legislative advocacy efforts related to the drought are also attached (Exhibit B & C).

**Resolution Encouraging Voluntary Water Conservation Measures:**

Due to the State of Emergency, the Governor has asked all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 20%. In support of this effort, and in recognition of the month of May as Water Awareness Month, it is recommended that the Board adopt the attached Resolution encouraging voluntary water conservation measures in Monterey County (Exhibit D).

**Future Efforts:**

Staff believes it may be beneficial to formalize the establishment of a countywide interagency drought task force to coordinate conservation efforts and messaging to the public. If the Board chooses to create such a task force, participants would include County representatives, local water purveyors/regulators, municipalities, and major users by economic sector. It is envisioned that such a group would meet initially to share information and coordinate messaging; however the group would be especially useful if the drought continues or becomes more severe.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

*External Agencies:* Cal OES, California Department of Public Health (CDPH), California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA); California Department of Water Resources (CDWR), CalFire; California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), California Volunteers, the California Endowment. Additionally, the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Office of the National weather Service is a key partner on both the state and local task forces, as is the CalFire San Benito Monterey Unit Chief and Fire Warden. *Internal Departments/Agencies:* OES; CAO-IGLA; WRA; RMA; Health; Parks; Social Services; and Agricultural Commissioner.

**FINANCING:**

There is no impact to the general fund related to receipt of this report. There could be impacts to the general fund resulting from actions which may potentially be taken if the drought continues or worsens. The Parks Department budget has been directly impacted by the lowering of water levels at Lake San Antonio, which has caused reduced usage opportunities along with an accompanying decline in revenue to the lakes budget unit.

Prepared by:

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Approved by:

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Attachments:

EXHIBIT A - Current Monterey County Drought Status & and Planned Conservation Measures  
EXHIBIT B - State legislative report on drought relief efforts; and  
EXHIBIT C - Federal legislative report on drought relief efforts  
EXHIBIT D - Resolution