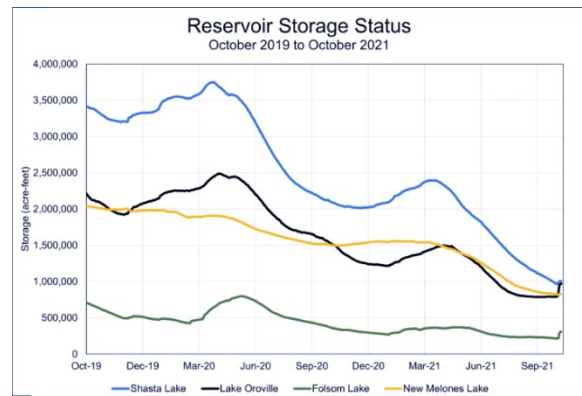


November 15, 2021

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.
- Recent storms provided a boost for some low reservoirs, but hydrologists say it will take 140 percent of average precipitation this winter to produce anything close to average runoff into rivers and streams due to the deficit in soil moisture. 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 Nov. 14, the state’s [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 123 dry wells in the past 30 days. Most of the dry wells were reported in Fresno, Madera, Mariposa and Tulare 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.

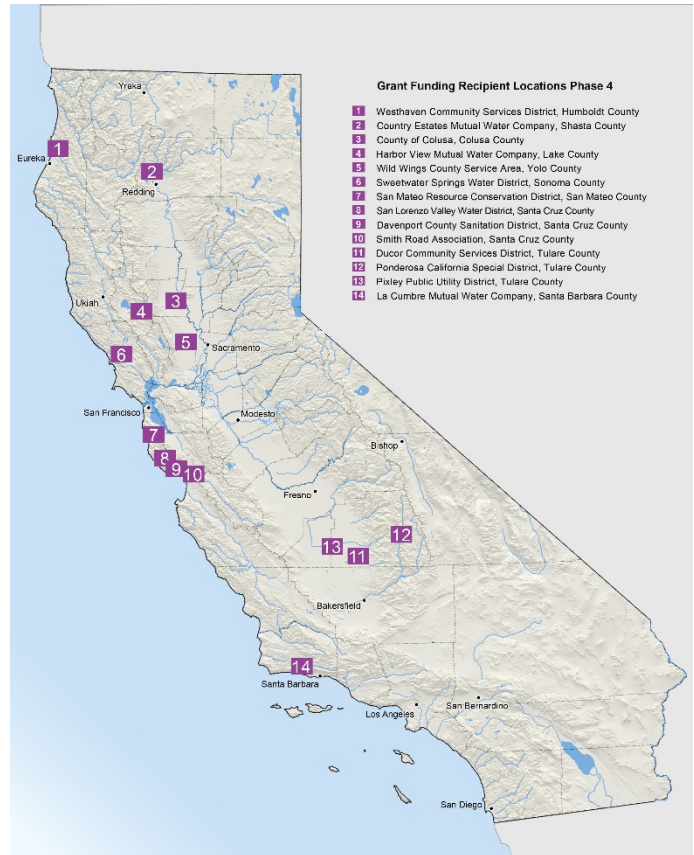


Recent Events and State Actions

MWD declares drought emergency, calls for mandatory conservation (Nov. 9): The board of directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) declared a drought emergency and called for increased conservation, especially in communities dependent largely on State Water Project supplies. This includes parts of Los Angeles, Ventura and San Bernardino counties served by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Calleguas Municipal Water District, Las Virgenes Municipal Water

District, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, Three Valleys Municipal Water District, and Inland Empire Utilities Agency. The board also approved a series of measures to expand various rebate and water-efficiency programs. MWD wholesales water to 19 million people from Ventura to San Diego and depends primarily upon the State Water Project (SWP) and the Colorado River. The key SWP reservoir, Lake Oroville, hit a historic low this summer and a zero SWP allocation is possible next year. MWD’s Colorado River supplies could be restricted starting as early as 2023 as storage shrinks in the river’s major reservoirs. DWR Director Karla Nemeth [applauded](#) MWD’s action for sending a strong message to all Californians that conservation is needed in this severe drought.

State awards drought-relief funding to small communities (Nov. 9): In another round of drought relief assistance for small communities, [DWR awarded \\$25 million](#) to 14 separate rural water providers. About half of the projects will benefit disadvantaged communities and all were chosen in coordination with the Water Board. In total, more than \$65 million has been awarded to 35 projects since the Administration and Legislature dedicated \$200 million to drought relief in July. The most recent grants will fund replacement of leaking pipelines and wells and installation of pump stations and storage tanks. Grants will go to water providers in Tulare, Lake, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Sonoma, Humboldt, Santa Barbara, San Mateo, Yolo and Colusa counties.



Public comment sought on groundwater grant guidelines (through Nov. 29): DWR is seeking public comment on [draft guidelines](#) for a \$150 million grant program for local groundwater agencies in critically overdrafted basins. The grants may be used for either planning or implementation, such as construction of recharge projects, to help comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Once the public comment period closes, DWR will release final guidelines and solicit proposals, with awards expected in early 2022.

Farm water efficiency grants (ongoing): CDFA has opened the request for proposals (RFP) for the [State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program \(SWEET\)](#) for four months on a first-come, first-serve basis or until funds are liquidated. The 2021-22 budget includes \$50 million for SWEET grants to implement irrigation systems that reduce greenhouse gases and save water on California agricultural operations. Eligible system components include (among others) soil moisture monitoring, drip systems, switching to low pressure irrigation systems, pump retrofits, variable frequency drives and installation of renewable energy.



Freeway signs feature conservation message (Nov. 5):

From Nov. 5 through Nov. 12, approximately 700 Caltrans electronic message signs across the state displayed “Serious Drought – Help Save Water” messages to help raise awareness of the need for Californians to save water during

the statewide drought.

Save Our Water partnership with 49ers kicks off (ongoing): A new partnership with the 49ers is bringing conservation messaging and tips to fans in Northern California. In-stadium ads and signage are in place, and PSAs will begin running soon. [Save Our Water](#) also can be found on social media, electronic billboards, radio and local TV programming around the state. Save Our Water, developed in partnership with local water agencies, emphasizes the need for Californians to take steps now to reduce water use.

Curtailments may be adjusted (ongoing): Continued dry weather may force adjustments as early as next week, but as of now all curtailments imposed in the Russian, Sacramento-San Joaquin, and Scott watersheds are lifted. Curtailments in the Shasta River watershed are still in place for rights with a priority date of 1923 and younger. Curtailment orders are still in place on Mill and Deer creeks, but regulations there are adaptive, and diverters can divert now when flows are above minimum flow thresholds. Curtailment orders may be reimposed as hydrology changes.

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.

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Workshop on groundwater grant guidelines: DWR hosts a public meeting **Nov. 16** at 2 p.m. to explain the draft guidelines, open for public comment until Nov. 29, for \$150 million in planning and implementation grants for local agencies managing critically overdrafted basins toward sustainability. The meeting will be virtual and recorded.

Conservation update: At its **Nov. 16** meeting, the State Water Board will hear a staff update on urban conservation for the month of September. Californians overall reduced urban water use by 5 percent in August compared to August 2020.

Initial State Water Project allocation for next year: Lake Oroville entered Water Year 2022 with record-low storage. Low storage means that the SWP’s initial allocation to project contractors on **Dec. 1** will be very low, and the subsequent low probability of getting an exceptionally wet winter means that the project’s final allocation is also likely to be low.

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