



California's Drought Fact Sheet

Back-to-back dry years and low reservoir levels have put California squarely in a statewide drought. State water officials say key reservoirs such as Lake Oroville will dip to record low levels later this fall. Mandatory rationing is in place in certain urban areas, and growers in some of California's most productive agricultural regions are seeing dramatic cuts in water deliveries.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared an official drought June 4. He also declared a local drought emergency in nine Central Valley counties due to water shortages. (More information can be found at <http://gov.ca.gov>.)

Runoff Projections

After a bountiful January and February, precipitation came to a virtual stop in March through June, qualifying the four-month period as the driest on record. 2008 saw the sixth driest April-May-June in 114 years of record keeping. Rainfall for the year is about at 75% of average.

The Department of Water Resources says runoff will be low enough to designate 2008 as critically dry on both the Sacramento and San Joaquin river systems.

Reservoir Storage

Storage in key statewide reservoirs continued to drop in June. Lake Oroville, one of the state's largest reservoirs and the mainstay of the State Water Project, is at 49% of average for this time of year. The lake is expected to drop to record low levels by this fall.

San Luis Reservoir, located south of the Delta, is at 40% of average. Some agricultural districts are under mandatory rationing to avoid drawing down San Luis at a rate that would put the earthen reservoir at risk of slumping. Urban water agencies are asking customers to conserve as well.

Total reservoir storage in the Colorado River system remains at roughly half of capacity, reflecting the preceding eight-year drought period.

Court Rulings & Wildfires

In December, a U.S. District Court judge ordered restrictions on water project operations in the Delta to help protect a threatened fish species, the Delta smelt. The restrictions are reducing water deliveries by as much as 30% this year to 25 million Californians. Millions of acres of farmland are also impacted. Another decision by the same judge involving salmon may also affect water project operations in the near future. A recent action regarding long-fin smelt may further tighten the screws.

The state's dry conditions are also exacerbating a very potent fire season. In late June, a lightning storm sparked more than 800 wildfires across the state, burning tens of thousands of acres and filling the air with smoke for weeks.



Sample Drought Resolution

WHEREAS, [Water Agency Name] is a public water agency empowered to provide water service within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the [Agency] adopted a voluntary (or mandatory) water conservation program [Date], encouraging its customers to take steps to reduce consumption by [Number]%; and

WHEREAS, the prolonged drought condition currently affecting California has continued through this past winter and spring; and

WHEREAS, the runoff available to the [Agency] from precipitation in the local watershed has steadily decreased during the drought; and

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2008, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger formally declared a condition of statewide drought, encouraging local water agencies to promote water conservation; and

WHEREAS, the [Agency's] sole source of water has declared a Water Supply Alert, urging local water purveyors to adopt and enforce drought regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the [Agency] hereby issues a water supply alert and declares a drought condition to exist in its service area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Agency] finds that although a program of voluntary measures to reduce consumption has resulted in some reduction in water usage by its customers, further measures are necessary to avoid additional demands being placed on its system during the drought; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Agency] hereby enacts the following water use prohibitions in the Agency's service area:

- a) Serving drinking water to any customer in a restaurant or other public place where food is served, sold, or offered for sale unless expressly requested by the customer;
- b) Operating a non-water conserving pre-rinse nozzle in a food-preparation establishment, such as a restaurant or cafeteria;
- c) Washing driveways, sidewalks, parking areas, patios or other outdoor areas with a hose unless using a water-conserving pressurized cleaning device;
- d) Irrigating landscape with potable water any day other than Monday, Thursday, or Saturday, except for very short periods of time for the expressed purpose of adjusting or repairing the irrigation system.
- e) Irrigating landscape with potable water between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Agency] hereby establishes a moratorium on new connections to the [Agency's] water distribution system. Effective [date], no will-serve letters will be issued to developers seeking new meter connections, nor will any new meter connections for new construction be approved. Existing will-serve letters will be honored according to their terms. The Board of Directors will review the continued necessity for this



moratorium no later than [date], and thereafter every six months until such time as drought conditions no longer exist and the statewide water supply has improved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [Agency] continues to urge its customers to:

- a) adjust sprinklers and irrigation systems to avoid overspray, runoff and waste;
- b) avoid watering lawns in the hot part of the day (i.e., between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.) and on windy days;
- c) install new drought tolerant landscaping, low-water-using trees and plants and efficient irrigation systems;
- d) shut off decorative fountains, unless a water recycling system is used;
- e) not hose down driveways, sidewalks and other paved surfaces, except when necessary for health or sanitary reasons;
- f) install pool and spa covers to minimize water loss due to evaporation;
- g) not allow the hose to run while washing any vehicle and to use a bucket or a hose with an automatic shutoff valve;
- h) retrofit indoor plumbing fixtures with low-flow devices; and
- i) check faucets, toilets and pipes, both indoor and outdoor, including house service laterals and sprinkler piping, for leaks and repair them immediately, or upon demand of the [Agency].

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if critical water shortages occur and supplies of water are reduced, the [Agency] will consider further action to curtail water use, including mandatory conservation measures, to prevent water waste.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the [Water Agency Name] on [date].



Sample Emergency Water Shortage Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. [XXX]

AN ORDINANCE ENACTED AS AN EMERGENCY MEASURE ESTABLISHING RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR RATIONING WATER DURING A WATER SHORTAGE EMERGENCY AND ESTABLISHING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF THE [Water Agency Name] DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS AND DETERMINATIONS

- (a) A water shortage emergency condition prevails within the area served by the [Water Agency Name].
- (b) The rules, regulations and restrictions set forth in this ordinance are intended to conserve the water supply of the [Water Agency Name] for the greatest public benefit with particular regard to domestic use, sanitation and fire protection.
- (c) The specific uses prohibited or restricted by this ordinance are nonessential, if allowed, would constitute wastage of [Water Agency Name] water, and should be prohibited pursuant to the [Agency's] general authority under its charter as well as the authority granted by State Water Code Section 350 et seq. and the common law.
- (d) The actions taken hereinafter are exempt from the provisions of Sections 21000 et seq. of the Public Resources Code as a project undertaken as immediate action necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency pursuant to Title 14, California Code of Regulations Section 15269 (State CEQA Guidelines).
- (e) The following measures are therefore found to be necessary as an emergency measure for preserving the public peace, health or safety.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

- (a) The "[Water Agency System]" is the [definition].
- (b) "[Director]" is [definition].
- (c) "Person" means any person, firm, partnership association, corporation, company, organization or governmental entity.
- (d) "Customer" means any person who uses water supplied by the [Water Agency Name].
- (e) "Process Water" means water used to manufacture, alter, convert, clean, heat or cool a product, including water used in laundries and recycled car wash facilities.
- (f) "Unit of Water" is 100 cubic feet of water.
- (g) "Water" is water from the [Water Agency Name].

SECTION 3. PROHIBITION OF NONESSENTIAL WATER USE

It shall be unlawful for any person to use water obtained from the [Water Agency Name] for nonessential uses as hereinafter defined.

SECTION 4. NONESSENTIAL USES DEFINED

The following uses of water are hereby determined to be nonessential, except as further provided herein:



- (a) Use of water in excess of those certain allotments set forth in Schedule A entitled "Allotment System For Water Use During Water Shortage Emergency" attached hereto and hereby made a part hereof. Allotments as established herein shall be based on [Year] use with adjustments for unusual conditions. New services or services without [Year] history shall be allotted on comparable customer usage. The Board of Directors is hereby authorized from time to time to establish by resolution allotments different from the allotments set forth in said Schedule A due to changes in circumstances.
- (b) Use of water through any meter when the customer has been given 10 days written notice to repair broken or defective plumbing, sprinkler, watering or irrigation systems and has failed to effect such repairs.
- (c) Use of water that results in flooding or runoff in gutters or streets.
- (d) Use of water through a hand-held hose for washing cars, buses, boats, trailers or other vehicles, unless the hose is equipped with a positive shutoff nozzle.
- (e) Use of water through a hand-held hose for washing buildings, structures, sidewalks, walkways, driveways, patios, parking lots, tennis courts, or other hard surfaced areas.
- (f) Use of water for filling any existing or new swimming pool or hot tub.
- (g) Use of water to clean, fill or maintain levels in decorative fountains.
- (h) Use of water for construction purposes such as consolidation of backfill unless no other source of water or other method can be used.
- (i) Service of water by restaurants except upon the request of a customer.

SECTION 5. EXCEPTIONS

Written application for an exception or adjustment may be made to:
[Water Agency Address]

The Director may

- (a) Grant permits for the uses of water otherwise prohibited or
 - (b) Adjust the established allotments if it is found that:
 - (1) To fail to do so would cause an emergency condition adversely affecting the health, sanitation, fire protection, or safety of the customer or the public, or adverse impacts such as loss of production or jobs; or
 - (2) The customer has demonstrated to the Director's satisfaction that circumstances have changed warranting a change in the customer's allotment.
- No permit shall be granted or allotment adjusted unless the customer has adopted all practicable water conservation measures and has demonstrated to the Director's satisfaction that there are no alternatives to the use of water from the [Water Agency Name] and that [Water Agency's] water will be used efficiently and without waste. The Director's denial of application for an exception or adjustments is final.

SECTION 6. EXCESS WATER USE CHARGE

- (a) In addition to regular metered service charges under [Code Number] of the [Governing Code], every consumer shall pay for each billing period an excess use charge for water delivered in excess of established allotments. This excess use charge shall be based upon a rate schedule as specified from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors.



(b) The excess use charge shall not apply to any residential customer whose consumption is 1000 cubic feet or less per bi-monthly billing period.

SECTION 7. ENFORCEMENT

(a) Installation of Flow-Restricting Devices: In lieu of or in addition to the penalties provided for in Section 356 of the Water Code, the [Water Agency Name] may, after one written warning, install a flow-restricting device on the service line of any customer violating any of the provisions of this ordinance, including use of water in excess of the established allotments.

(b) Charges for Installation and Removal of Flow-Restricting Devices: Charges for installation and removal of flow-restricting devices shall be based upon a rate schedule as specified from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors.

(c) Discontinuance of Water Service: Continued water consumption in violation of the provisions of this ordinance may result in the discontinuance of water service by the [Water Agency Name]. A charge shall be paid prior to reactivating a service that has been discontinued as provided herein. The charge shall be specified from time to time by resolution of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

The findings and determinations set forth in Section 1. hereof constitute the statement of reasons for adopting this ordinance as an emergency measure in the manner provided by Section 617 of the Charter. This ordinance shall be effective immediately.

SECTION 9. OPERATIVE DATE

The requirements of this ordinance shall be operative as of [Date].

INTRODUCED at a regular meeting of [Water Agency Name], held the [Date], by Board Member



Sample Newsletter Article / Language for Bill Stuffer

California's Drought *Current Conditions and What You Can Do to Help*

It's official. California is in a drought. After a bountiful January and February, precipitation in the state came to a virtual stop in March through June, making the four-month period the driest on record, and the sixth driest April-May-June in 114 years of record keeping. Rainfall for the year is at about 75% of average, according to the California Department of Water Resources.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a statewide drought on June 4. He also declared a local drought emergency in nine Central Valley counties due to water shortages.

The low rainfall and reduced runoff has caused water levels in key statewide reservoirs to drop to critically low levels. In normal years, storage levels increase in spring months as snowmelt runs off from the Sierra. This year, melting snow evaporated at a faster pace than usual, and watersheds were so dry from 2007 levels that snowmelt quickly soaked into the ground before making its way into streams and reservoirs.

Some of the state's key reservoirs, such as Lake Oroville and the federal San Luis Reservoir, are at 49% and 40% of their average capacities, respectively – and they continue to drop.

Making matters even worse, a federal judge has restricted pumping in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to protect a threatened fish species, the Delta smelt. The restrictions are reducing water deliveries by as much as 30% this year to 25 million Californians. Several more upcoming court decisions may further restrict pumping in the Delta.

The state's drought conditions mean there is much less water available for California's residents and businesses. Fortunately, there are some things that consumers can do to help conserve the resources available and ensure a future supply.

How You Can Help

A majority of residential water use comes from outdoor uses, such as landscaping and cleaning sidewalks and driveways. Reducing landscape watering time, watering only after 6 p.m. and before 9 a.m., replacing lawns with drought-tolerant landscaping, and using brooms instead of hoses to clean off driveways are some ways that residents can help save precious water resources.

Inside the home, residents can save water by turning off the faucet when brushing teeth, doubling up on kids in the bathtub and installing low-flow toilets and water efficient appliances. For more tips and ideas on how to save water inside and outside the home, visit www.wateraware.org.

There's no doubt about it: California water users are facing extremely tight supplies in the coming months. We must all work together to make sure that supplies last as long as possible.



Drought Impacts on California Water Agencies

Based on a survey prepared by the Association of California Water Agencies

With California officially in a drought, local water agencies are dealing with challenges ranging from low runoff to court-ordered reductions in water deliveries to soaring energy costs.

An informal survey conducted by ACWA shows drought conditions are having an array of impacts on local water agencies. About 80 ACWA members have responded to the survey so far. Of those responding:

- 40% have declared a water supply or drought alert.
- 70% are calling for voluntary conservation, and 13% have mandatory rationing in place.
- 25% have imposed restrictions on outdoor watering.
- 50% of agricultural agencies say they are rationing irrigation water, and 22% say farmland is being fallowed.
- 16% say crops are being abandoned.
- 39% are drawing down their water reserves / reservoir storage to meet needs this year.
- 29% say there are pumping more groundwater to offset the loss of surface water
- 44% say they have less water available for groundwater recharge this year.
- 34% say they are planning to increase water rates due to water supply shortages.
- 17% say they have drought rates / surcharges in place
- Of those not taking action now, 83% anticipate taking action in the future.

In the comments section, respondents have reported seeing farmers turn to their own wells to pump water to crops; implementing a tiered-rate structure to discourage high use; modifying will-serve letters to developers; limiting new connections to 10 per year; and implementing drought surcharges for water use exceeding 75%. Many anticipate taking more stringent action in 2009 if weather patterns continue.

More on the drought and ACWA's 450 public water agency members is available at www.acwa.com.

ACWA Contacts

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Drought and General Water Resources

Water Supply Conditions / Agency Assistance

Association of California Water Agencies www.acwa.com

California Department of Water Resources www.water.ca.gov/drought

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation www.usbr.gov/mp

General Water & Consumer Information

California Water Awareness Campaign www.wateraware.org

California Urban Water Conservation Council www.cuwcc.org/home.html

Water Education Foundation www.water-ed.org

California Department of Water Resources (gray water standards)

www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/Revised_Graywater_Standards.pdf

Agricultural Information

California Farm Bureau Federation www.cfbf.org

California Farm Water Coalition www.farmwater.org

Western Growers Association www.wga.com

CALIFORNIA WATER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN'S "NICE SAVE!" CAMPAIGN

Here it is – your compact disc containing all the graphics you need to use the **Nice Save!** campaign in your community!

Included on the disc are the following items illustrating five different ways to save water: Spanish versions are included for all components.

- Print ads in three standard sizes for publications
- Transit ads in two sizes (bus back & bus interior)
- Utility bill insert



Web-based files of each component are included on the disc so you can post them on your Web site!

Also included is the **Nice Save!** logo ready for you to use in your promotional messages and/or publications.



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