
State Water Resources Control Board

March 21, 2022

PREPARE FOR MORE DROUGHT IMPACTS DUE TO ONGOING DRY CONDITIONS

Despite record-breaking storms in October and December 2021, most of California is experiencing a severe drought due to the driest January and February on record. These conditions are worsening quickly and can threaten water supplies, impair critical habitat, reduce recreational opportunities, and create uncertainty for all water users.

Plan Ahead

As we head into a third dry year, it's important to plan for water supply shortages and identify actions you can take to conserve water and adapt to drought conditions, such as reducing irrigated acreage, using innovative irrigation techniques, managing herd size, or diversifying your water supply portfolio. Your early efforts can help minimize the potential impact of water management actions on businesses, homes, farms, and California's environment.

Report Water Use

The Division of Water Rights needs accurate and timely data to manage California's water and keep diverters informed, particularly when water supplies are limited. Now more than ever, it is vital that you report your water diversion and use data on time. All diverters must report their annual water use by April 1, 2022. Many diverters are also required to report diversion metering and measuring data by this deadline.

Accurately reporting your water use and diversion data on time fulfills your legal obligation and allows the Division of Water Rights to better manage the state's water rights system, protect lawful diversions, and more precisely curtail when needed. Better reporting by all diverters is the cornerstone of a modern water rights system.

Dry Conditions

We are experiencing historic dry conditions: February is usually California's wettest month, but January and February 2022 were the driest we've seen in recorded history. Statewide, precipitation is less than half the yearly average, and dry conditions are forecast to continue through spring. Last year, extreme drought conditions led to unprecedented actions by the State Water Board that included curtailment of water rights in many California watersheds.

The Division of Water Rights is preparing similar actions for 2022, and we plan to ask the State Water Board to consider emergency regulations to curtail water rights in certain watersheds if dry conditions continue or worsen. If you are in the Bay-Delta, Russian River, Scott River, Shasta River, Mill Creek, or Deer Creek watersheds, you should prepare for earlier curtailments.

We are monitoring the situation closely and will engage with water users as we know more. We encourage you to collaborate with your community to develop cooperative water management solutions that meet both local and state-level needs. Drought resources are included below:

Drought Resources

State Water Board Drought Information

Information and updates on Division of Water Rights drought activities, including emergency regulations, curtailment updates, and regional drought responses are available at waterboards.ca.gov/drought.

Emergency Drinking Water Assistance

Help is available if you are having trouble getting water in your home or your drinking water well has gone dry. Information about programs in your area are available at waterboards.ca.gov/drought/drought_assistance.

Drought Funding Programs

The state offers a variety of funding programs to help Californians during drought. Information is available at waterboards.ca.gov/drought/funding_available.

Annual Water Use Reporting

Water diverters must report their annual water use each year. Requirements and details on how to report are available at bit.ly/AnnualWaterReport.

Measuring and Metering Requirements

Many water right diverters are required to report measuring and metering data each year. Guidance on these requirements is available at bit.ly/WaterMeasurement.

Questions

Email your questions to drought@waterboards.ca.gov.