



Media Release

UPDATE ON STATE WATER BOARD'S EMERGENCY WATER CONSERVATION REGULATION **URBAN WATER SUPPLIERS REPORT PROGRESS** **ON CONSERVATION MEASURES**

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California's urban water conservation efforts for the month of July resulted in a seven and one-half percent drop, statewide, in urban water usage from a year ago, according to results of a survey of retail water suppliers released today by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board).

The percentage drop in urban water usage represents more than 17 billion gallons of water - the equivalent to 25,755 Olympic-sized swimming pools or enough water for 1.7 billion people each to take a 5-minute shower. The average level of conservation achieved across each of the state's hydrologic regions ranged from 2 percent to 22 percent during this first reporting period. Of the 362 urban water suppliers that submitted their water production data, 44 representing 3.2 million Californians reported conservation gains above 20 percent for the month of July over the preceding year.

In July, the State Water Board adopted an emergency water conservation regulation, which required mandatory reporting of water usage by urban water suppliers. The seven and one-half percent drop in water usage represents numbers reported by 87 percent of urban water suppliers which have responded to the survey thus far, representing 97 percent of the population served.

There are 414 urban water suppliers covered by the regulation. Of those, 362 serving 33 million Californians have returned the surveys. The State Water Board is working with the remaining water suppliers to ensure their water production data is provided as required by the Emergency Conservation Regulation. Reports are due on the 15th of each month.

"We are glad to see the progress that many more California urban communities have made to conserve water," said Felicia Marcus, Chair of the State Water Board. "Every action, from taking a shorter shower, to putting a lawn on a water diet, to replacing turf with drought-tolerant landscaping, contributes to every community's water security. While this initial report is an improvement, we hope and trust that it is just a start. Countless Californians see and feel the effects of this drought and know that we still are facing a drought that may be far from over –

C A L I F O R N I A E N V I R O N M E N T A L P R O T E C T I O N A G E N C Y



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others still do not and can and should step up. Wasting precious potable water today imperils our communities' future.”

At the Sept. 9 Board meeting, additional information about the first month's results was presented. This information included results by region, noteworthy water supplier conservation and enforcement actions, and observations about how residents and businesses have responded.

Since the [Emergency Water Conservation Regulation](#) went into effect, the Board has received hundreds of emails, phone calls, and letters on water conservation concerns and actions by the residents and businesses in California.

Within two weeks of enactment of the emergency regulation, approximately 70 percent of the state's urban water suppliers implemented mandatory outdoor irrigation restrictions. Many more water suppliers took action during August and early September. A fact sheet detailing the emergency regulation is [here](#).

Some northern California communities facing acute water shortages have dramatically reduced their water consumption by as much as 40-50 percent. Southern California communities have been aggressive in implementing outdoor conservation such as offering turf removal programs. Approximately 2.5 million square feet of turf was removed from residential properties in Southern California in July (1665 front yards), while an additional 4.7 million square feet of turf was removed from commercial properties in Southern California in July (82 football fields).

In his Jan. 17, 2014 Emergency Drought Proclamation, Governor Brown called for Californians to reduce their water use by 20 percent. The trend of increasing reductions shows that Californians have heeded the call to conserve, but that more can and must be done to protect our water supplies should the drought persist. A 20 percent reduction is an ambitious but achievable goal. Current forecasts indicate that Californians cannot count upon a wet winter to alleviate the drought conditions.

Additional Resources and Next Steps

The June and July water production data is available [here](#). The staff presentation to the Board is also available [here](#). Data on August water production is due to the Board on Sept. 15.

Beginning on Oct. 15, water suppliers will also be required to provide an estimate of gallons per-capita per-day for residential customers. While the overall amount of water production is important information, it does not describe the amount of water used every day by residential customers, which is the best way to measure conservation. The Department of Water Resources will be providing guidance to Water Suppliers to help calculate gallons-per-capita, per day of water used by within their service areas.

Following the release of the August water production reports in mid-September, the Board is expected to discuss next steps, including whether more aggressive actions are needed to reach the Governor's 20 percent target. The Board will also consider whether steps to enforce compliance with the reporting and/or Water Shortage Contingency Plan implementation requirements are needed.

The Emergency Conservation Regulation will be in effect until April 25, 2015, and may be extended if drought conditions persist.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to reduce their water use by 20 percent and prevent water waste – visit SaveOurH2O.org to find out how everyone can do their part, and visit Drought.CA.Gov to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.