



Media Release

CALIFORNIA WATER USE DROPS 31.3 PERCENT, EXCEEDS 25 PERCENT MANDATE FOR JULY

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SACRAMENTO – Despite continued hot conditions, Californians surpassed June’s conservation rate and reduced water use by 31.3 percent during July, exceeding Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.’s 25 percent mandate for a second consecutive month since the new emergency conservation regulation took effect.

For June and July, the cumulative statewide savings was 29.5 percent. Saving water in the hot summer months is critical to meeting the State’s overall 25 percent savings goal through February 2016, as the summer is when the greatest amount of water is traditionally used, particularly on outdoor ornamental landscapes. State officials urged residential water users to keep up their efforts to conserve.

“Californians’ response to the severity of the drought this summer is now in high gear and shows that they get that we are in the drought of our lives. This isn’t your mother’s drought or your grandmother’s drought, this is the drought of the century,” said Felicia Marcus, Chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. “Millions of conscientious Californians are the real heroes here — each stepping up to help local water resources last longer in the face of an historic drought with no certain end date.”

July’s water savings moved the State 228,940 acre-feet (74.6 billion gallons) closer to the goal of saving 1.2 million acre-feet by February 2016, as called for by the Governor in his April 1 [Executive Order](#). Cumulative savings for June and July is 414,800 acre-feet, or 35 percent of the savings goal.



Conservation programs put in place during the late spring and early summer months by most of the State’s water suppliers are now in full swing, yielding dramatic reductions in water use



and heightened water use awareness. With dry conditions forecast to continue through November, the focus remains not only on enhancing current efforts but on encouraging suppliers that are behind to make the commitment to conservation and meet or beat their targets.

The [emergency water conservation regulation](#) requires urban water suppliers to provide monthly water use reports to the State Water Board. Urban water suppliers are expected to meet, or exceed, their [individual conservation standard](#) starting in June and continuing through February 2016. The year 2013 serves as the baseline for determining water savings statewide. The current report is posted [here](#).

July Highlights

- The percent of water saved by the State's large urban water agency suppliers increased from 27.3 percent in June to 31.3 percent in July, in same-month water use comparisons of 2015 to 2013. A four percentage point increase in conservation is exceptional considering July is historically one of the highest water-consuming months in California.
- The amount of water saved in July 2015 (74.6 billion gallons) is more than four times the amount of water saved in July 2014 (18.0 billion gallons), when the State's voluntary 20 percent conservation goal was in effect.
- Statewide, the average residential water use was 98 gallons per capita per day for July 2015, a similar level of residential water use as reported in June 2015 (98.1 residential gallons per capita per day, or R-GPCD), but significantly lower than residential water use in July 2014 (statewide average R-GPCD of 132.9).
- 290 water suppliers, serving 29.2 million people, met or exceeded their conservation standard in July, up from 265 water suppliers in June. 98 water suppliers exceeded their conservation standard by 10 percent, while 67 water suppliers exceeded their conservation standard by 15 percent or more.

See the how the hydrologic regions did for the month of July [here](#).

Compliance Statistics

July brought big improvements for the water suppliers that were significantly behind the conservation curve in June. With 402 water supplier reports submitted for July, 290 suppliers (72 percent) met, or were within one percent of, their conservation standard; 59 suppliers (15 percent) were between one and five percent of meeting their conservation standard; and 49 suppliers (12 percent) were between five and 15 percent of meeting their conservation standard.

There were only four suppliers (one percent) in July reporting that they were more than 15 percent away from meeting their conservation standard – a 75 percent drop in the number of suppliers reporting that they were this far away from meeting their standard in June. The July Compliance data can be found [here](#).

All water suppliers that did not meet their June conservation standard were contacted following the release of the June data. Many were required to provide information about their existing conservation programs and the steps they are taking to boost conservation. Conservation Orders are being issued to those water suppliers that are far behind and do not have the programs in place to meet their standard. A fact sheet on compliance can be found [here](#).

Local Enforcement and Education Programs Continue Ramping Up

Water suppliers reported that while their July statistics demonstrate that the number of complaints and warnings may be leveling off, the number of penalties is rising as the local programs mature.

- 38,665 water waste complaints were reported statewide (by 374 suppliers), compared with 45,234 complaints reported in June (by 374 suppliers);
- 37,170 formal warnings were issued for water waste statewide (by 323 suppliers), compared with 36,302 formal warnings in June (by 313 suppliers); and
- 15,845 penalties were issued statewide (by 79 suppliers), compared with 8,876 penalties issued in June (by 54 suppliers).

Warnings and penalties not only draw attention to water wasting activities and undetected leaks, but they also complement local outreach and education programs to reduce water use. Water suppliers have stepped up their communications considerably in the last two months and are extending their education programs to cover other drought-related needs such as irrigation and mulching practices to [maintain healthy trees](#) while limiting water for ornamental landscapes.

The July urban water supplier enforcement statistics can be found [here](#).

July's Top Performers

“Historically, water use rises dramatically in the hot summer months, primarily for landscape watering, which on average constitutes 50 percent of urban water use, in some cases far more. This is the time when we can most easily save the most water,” said Marcus.

“Fortunately, most water districts and their customers are finally stepping up to show what they can do. It’s impressive, and not a moment too soon--and should motivate those who haven’t yet met their goals to meet them. We’re also ramping up our enforcement efforts for extra motivation.”

Dozens of communities reduced water use more than 15 percent beyond their conservation standards in July 2015. The list of stand-out communities includes Mammoth Community Water District (South Lahontan), Valencia Water Company (South Coast) and the City of Livermore (San Francisco Bay Area). These high achievers continue to represent both inland and coastal communities, proving that it can be done wherever you are. Suppliers demonstrating remarkable performance included:

- **Golden State Water Company Simi Valley** – reduced water use by 40 percent in July, bringing R-GPCD to 85 gallons, in line with many other South Coast communities.
- **City of Santa Cruz** - achieved a cumulative 31.5 percent savings for June and July, 22.5 percent over its 8 percent conservation standard. The district has implemented a water school to educate residents on how to reduce water use.
- **City of Santa Rosa** – reduced water use by 43.8 percent in July, 2.5 times greater than the city's 16 percent conservation standard.
- **City of West Sacramento** – achieved a cumulative 34 percent savings for June and July, despite having a significant amount of commercial and industrial use.

Background

In his April 1 [Executive Order](#), Governor Brown mandated a 25 percent water use reduction for cities and towns across California.

In May, the State Water Board adopted an [emergency regulation](#) requiring an immediate 25 percent reduction in overall potable urban water use. The regulation uses a sliding scale for setting conservation standards, so that communities that have already reduced their R-GPCD through past conservation will have lower mandates than those that have not made such gains since the last major drought.

Each month, the State Water Board compares every urban water supplier's water use with their use for the same month in 2013 to determine if they are on track for meeting their conservation standard. Local water agencies determine the most cost effective and locally appropriate way to achieve their standard. The State Water Board will work closely with water suppliers to implement the regulation and improve local efforts that are falling short.

California has been dealing with the effects of an unprecedented drought. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit [Drought.CA.Gov](#). Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](#).