



Media Release

Continued dry conditions prompt early warning about potential water shortages

Water users urged to reduce and conserve

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SACRAMENTO – As dry conditions persist throughout California, the State Water Resources Control Board today mailed early warning notices to approximately 40,000 water right holders, urging them to plan for potential shortages by reducing water use and adopting practical conservation measures.

Reservoir and groundwater levels are significantly below average, and despite recent storms, snowpack is only 63% of average as of March 10. After two years of below average precipitation, officials don't expect the April 1 snow survey to reveal significant improvement in the water supply outlook this year. April 1 is typically the peak of California's snowpack, which, in an average year, provides 30% of the state's water supply. Drought is a recurring feature of the California climate, and what we've learned from our past efforts in previous droughts has improved our drought resilience. We know from experience that early action can help minimize short term drought impacts and improve our ability to withstand multiple dry years in a row.

"Planting crops and other decisions that are dictated by water supply are made early in the year, so early warnings are vital," said Erik Ek Dahl, deputy director for the Water Board's Division of Water Rights. "These letters give water users time to prepare and help minimize the impacts of reduced supplies on businesses, farms and homes."

Agricultural water users can implement practical actions now to improve their drought resilience, including reducing irrigated acreage, managing herd size, using innovative irrigation and diversifying water supply portfolios. Urban water users can conserve by putting in drought-resistant landscape, reducing outdoor irrigation and replacing older house fixtures and appliances with more efficient ones.

Additionally, all diverters are legally required to report their annual water use to the State Water Board. Accurate and timely reporting of information is crucial to managing the state's water resources.

In preparing for potential droughts, the State Water Board partners with multiple state, local and federal agencies, including California Department of Water Resources, Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Service, Tribal governments and water management organizations. Staff will continue to coordinate as it monitors the situation and engage more frequently with water users if conditions continue or worsen.

Current [drought](#) conditions can be found on the National Integrated Drought Information System website.

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and ensure proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. Please visit California's [Water Resilience Portfolio](#) to learn more about how our state is preparing for our future water needs.