

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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New Water Year Begins with Above-Average Supply

When the new "water year" begins on October 1, Californians will again have something to cheer about. For the second year in a row, major reservoirs are storing more than average amounts.

The Department of Water Resources reports that by that date--the official start of the precipitation year for water-watchers--the average level of the 155 largest reservoirs in California will be nearly 20 percent higher than the historic average.

That's good news for everyone, particularly water-dependent businesses like agriculture, manufacturing, and recreation.

After experiencing six straight dry years in the 1980s and early 90s, the state has had three wet years out of four (1993, 1995, 1996).

Back-to-back wet years have kept reservoir levels above historic levels.

Following floods and high snowmelt runoff in 1995, reservoirs ended the 1995 water year at 75 percent of capacity, or 130 percent of average. This year, reservoirs stand at just under 70 percent of capacity, or about 20 percent above average.

Still, officials caution that we don't know what kind of winter lies ahead and that basic measures that avoid wasteful water use are still in order at home and on the job.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam

safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs. The State Water Project provides water to two-thirds of California's population.

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