

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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DWR to Hold Hearings in Northern, Central California on Water Supply Outlook

SACRAMENTO -- The Department of Water Resources will hold public hearings in Northern and Central California this month on a new edition of the California Water Plan that forecasts a serious statewide water shortage early in the next century unless a variety of options is exercised.

Hearings are scheduled for Sacramento on February 20, Concord on February 23, Fresno on February 24, and Redding on February 26.

The Friday, February 20 hearing on the California Water Plan update, also known as Bulletin 160-98, will be held at 4 p.m. in Elks Lodge No.6 at 6446 Riverside Boulevard in Sacramento. As in the other hearings, DWR officials will review Bulletin 160-98 and accept comments on the document.

Two hearings will be held in Concord on Monday, February 23, in the board room of the Contra Costa Water District at 1331 Concord Avenue. The Concord hearings are scheduled for 1:30 pm. and 6:30 pm.

The hearing in Fresno will be held at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 24, in Room 1036 of the Hugh Burns State Building at 2550 Mariposa Mall.

The Redding hearing on Bulletin 160-98 will be held at 4 p.m. on Thursday, February 26, in the Siskiyou Room of the Doubletree Hotel at 1830 Hilltop Drive.

The updated Water Plan foresees a significant shortfall between water demand and supply by the year 2020 unless substantial water conservation and development measures are taken.

California's continuing population increase is the major factor in the water supply projections. The state's population is expected to jump from 32 million to 47.5 million people by 2020. In addition, increases in water for environmental needs are expected, primarily as a result of increased instream flow requirements in Central Valley waterways.

By 2020, the water shortfall without major conservation and development measures is predicted to be approximately 2.9 million acre-feet in an average water year, and 7 million acre-feet in a drought year.

"Californians cannot afford to sustain future water shortages of this magnitude," the Water Plan states. "The magnitude of potential shortages, especially drought year shortages, demonstrates the urgency of taking action."

The Water Plan, which is updated every five years, quantifies how projects and programs now being planned by water agencies throughout the state would reduce water shortages. Local agencies provide approximately 70 percent of California's water supply.

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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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