



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2014

Contacts:

Ted Thomas, Information Officer
(916) 653-9712
Ted.Thomas@water.ca.gov

Doug Carlson, Information Officer
(916) 653-5114
Paul.Carlson@water.ca.gov

Dry Water Year 2014 Ends Tomorrow *Conservation Critical as New Water Year Begins*

SACRAMENTO – Water Year 2014, ending tomorrow, is going into the record books as one of California’s driest ever with no promise that the new water year beginning Wednesday will be any wetter.

As the calendar turns after three years of drought, reservoirs are low, vast tracts of farmland lie fallow and some communities are scrambling for drinking water.

In January, normally California’s wettest month, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. declared a drought emergency and followed up with statewide water conservation goals. On September 19, the Governor streamlined the delivery of water to families in dire need.

DWR has reduced State Water Project deliveries to a record low five percent of requests while the federal Central Valley Project has reduced deliveries down to zero for some junior rights holders.

Forest fires, brown lawns, food banks, groundwater legislation and water management debates all are results of a deepening drought as the winter months approach without a good reading of whether they will be wet or dry.

“The immediate certainty is that day-to-day conservation – wise, sparing use of water – is essential as we face the possibility of a fourth dry winter,” said DWR Director Mark Cowin.

The Water Year (October 1 – September 30) is ending with less than 60 percent of average precipitation. And on September 1, the state’s major reservoirs collectively held only 57 percent of average storage for the date, or about 36 percent of capacity. Cumulative reservoir storage in 1977, to date California’s driest year on record, was approximately five million acre-feet less than today but the state in that year had millions fewer people.

Recent storms have been encouraging, but haven’t seriously dented the state’s drought and forecasters can’t accurately predict if we will get the series of major storms required to break the drought.

Predictions El Nino conditions that signal precipitation patterns in some areas of the world have waxed and waned, but meteorologists note that the phenomenon is not a reliable indicator of weather

in California, especially not in the Northern Sierra watersheds that feed some of the state's largest reservoirs.

Even if the storms arrive, conservation will still be essential to counter the years-long drain on the state's water supply.

DWR and the Association of California Water Agencies urge all Californians to conserve water by following the advice and tips found at <http://SaveOurWater.com>.

DWR's California Data Exchange Center websites show current water conditions at the state's largest reservoirs and weather stations.

Reservoirs: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reservoir.html>

Precipitation: http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow_rain.html

-30-

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood management and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

Contact the DWR Public Affairs Office for more information

