



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

## NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Dam Safety Awareness Day: Promoting Dam Safety throughout California**

SACRAMENTO – National Dam Safety Awareness Day occurs on May 31 each year to commemorate the 1889 failure of South Fork Dam in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. More than 2,200 people died in this dam failure. No other dam failure in the United States has resulted in a greater loss of life.

The primary goal of National Dam Safety Awareness Day is to encourage and promote dam safety, which includes helping the public understand ongoing work to prevent catastrophic dam failures.

Since August 14, 1929, the State of California has supervised dams to prevent failure, safeguard lives and protect property. The state took on this role after the March 1928 failure of St. Francis Dam in Los Angeles County. This resulting flood killed more than 450 people and caused significant property damage.

The California Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) within the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is responsible for regulating approximately 1,250 dams in the state to ensure dam safety. Through independent analyses and on-site inspections, DSOD engineers and geologists oversee dam design and construction, as well as operations and maintenance to protect people and property from dam failure.

A prime example of DSOD's dam safety role is the replacement of Calaveras Dam in Alameda County. This 200-foot-high dam was found to be vulnerable to earthquake as part of a routine periodic review of high-hazard dams located near active faults. To reduce risk until a replacement dam could be constructed, reservoir storage was significantly restricted to a level deemed safe for the interim. With design and construction oversight by DSOD, the City and County of San Francisco is building New Calaveras Dam immediately downstream of the existing Calaveras Dam. (See an article on the Calaveras Dam project in the [Winter 2014/2015 edition of DWR News](#).)

While dams provide many benefits, they also pose a significant hazard. Dam owners, individuals living and working downstream, first responders, local and state officials all are encouraged to know the risks and benefits of dams located in their respective communities.

Visit <http://engineeringstrongersafer.net/> to find out how you can support National Dam Safety Awareness Day in your community.

Visit <http://www.damsafety.org/> for the Association of State Dam Safety Officials website.

Visit <http://www.water.ca.gov/damsafety/> for California Division of Safety of Dams website.

Visit [www.fema.gov/protecting-our-communities/dam-safety](http://www.fema.gov/protecting-our-communities/dam-safety) for FEMA's dam safety website.

To learn about the actions the state has taken to manage California's water system and cope with the impacts of the four-year drought, visit [Drought.CA.Gov](http://Drought.CA.Gov).

Every Californian can take steps to conserve water. Find out how at [SaveOurWater.com](http://SaveOurWater.com).

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