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PRESS RELEASE**



**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE  
STATE GOVERNOR**

## **GOVERNOR BROWN DIRECTS FIRST EVER STATEWIDE MANDATORY WATER REDUCTIONS**

4-1-2015

SACRAMENTO – Following the lowest snowpack ever recorded and with no end to the drought in sight, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. today announced actions that will save water, increase enforcement to prevent wasteful water use, streamline the state’s drought response and invest in new technologies that will make California more drought resilient.

“Today we are standing on dry grass where there should be five feet of snow. This historic drought demands unprecedented action,” said Governor Brown. Therefore, I’m issuing an executive order mandating substantial water reductions across our state. As Californians, we must pull together and save water in every way possible.”

High resolution photos of previous snow surveys are available [here](#).

For more than two years, the state’s experts have been managing water resources to ensure that the state survives this drought and is better prepared for the next one. Last year, the Governor proclaimed a drought state of emergency. The state has taken steps to make sure that water is available for human health and safety, growing food, fighting fires and protecting fish and wildlife. Millions have been spent helping thousands of California families most impacted by the drought pay their bills, put food on their tables and have water to drink.

The following is a summary of the executive order issued by the Governor today.

### **Save Water**

For the first time in state history, the Governor has directed the State Water Resources Control Board to implement mandatory water reductions in cities and towns across California to reduce water usage by 25 percent. This savings amounts to approximately 1.5 million acre-feet of water over the next nine months, or nearly as much as is currently in Lake Oroville.

To save more water now, the order will also:

- Replace 50 million square feet of lawns throughout the state with drought tolerant landscaping in partnership with local government;
- Direct the creation of a temporary, statewide consumer rebate program to replace old appliances with more water and energy efficient models;
- Require campuses, golf courses, cemeteries and other large landscapes to make significant cuts in water use; and
- Prohibit new homes and development from irrigating with potable water unless water efficient drip irrigation systems are used, and ban watering of ornamental grass on public street medians.

## **Increase Enforcement**

The Governor's order calls on local water agencies to adjust their rate structures to implement conservation pricing, recognized as an effective way to realize water reductions and discourage water waste.

Agricultural water uses – which have borne much of the brunt of the drought to date, with hundreds of thousands of fallowed acres, significantly reduced water allocations and thousands of farmworkers laid off – will be required to report more water use information to state regulators, increasing the state's ability to enforce against illegal diversion and waster and unreasonable use of water under today's order. Additionally, the Governor's action strengthens standards for Agricultural Water Management Plans submitted by large agriculture water districts and requires small agriculture water districts to develop similar plans. These plans will help ensure that agricultural communities are prepared in case the drought extends into 2016.

Additional actions required by the order include:

- Taking action against water agencies in depleted groundwater basins that have not shared data on their groundwater supplies with the state;
- Updating standards for toilets and faucets and outdoor landscaping in residential communities and taking action against communities that ignore these standards; and
- Making permanent monthly reporting of water usage, conservation and enforcement actions by local water suppliers.

## **Streamline Government Response**

The order:

- Prioritizes state review and decision-making of water infrastructure projects and requires state agencies to report to the Governor's Office on any application pending for more than 90 days;
- Streamlines permitting and review of emergency drought salinity barriers – necessary to keep freshwater supplies in upstream reservoirs for human use and habitat protection for endangered and threatened species;
- Simplifies the review and approval process for voluntary water transfers and emergency drinking water projects; and
- Directs state department to provide temporary relocation assistance to families who need to move from homes where domestic wells have run dry to housing with running water.

## **Invest in New Technologies**

The order helps make California more drought resilient by:

- Incentivizing promising new technology that will make California more water efficient through a new program administered by the California Energy Commission.

The full text of the executive order can be found [here](#).

For more than two years, California has been dealing with the effects of drought. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit [Drought.CA.Gov](http://Drought.CA.Gov).

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