



Media Release

STATE WATER BOARD REPORTS DECLINE IN URBAN WATER CONSERVATION RATES IN OCTOBER, BUT TOTAL URBAN WATER PRODUCTION RATES DOWN

BOARD ANNOUNCES WATER CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

DEC. 17 TO PLAN FOR A DRY 2015

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SACRAMENTO – After leveling off in September, statewide residential water conservation receded in October to just a 6.7 percent reduction in year-over-year water use.

In the most recent survey of nearly 400 urban water retailers, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) learned that while residential water use per person continues to decline this year, the rate at which water conservation has been occurring in each community compared to water use last year declined for the second straight month.

Year over year monthly residential water savings statewide dropped from 10.3 percent in September, to 6.7 percent in October, although residents used less water in October 2014 compared to September 2014. The decline in year over year monthly savings raises questions about whether efforts are slacking off or whether it is just that residents tend to use less water as the weather cools. Nonetheless, the numbers prompted concern that state residents won't be prepared if California faces a fourth year of drought conditions in 2015.

“Recent rains are no reason to let up on our conservation efforts,” said Felicia Marcus, chair of the State Water Board. “It will take many sustained storms to get us out of this horrible drought. This latest report raises questions whether some residents have slowed on water conservation efforts, whether conditions like temperature made a big difference in different areas, or whether it is just time to direct agencies to find additional conservation opportunities in day-to-day water use.”

As an example, the South Coast exhibited a decline in monthly water savings dropping to 1.4 percent savings in October as compared to 7.5 percent savings during September. With 56 percent of all the residential water customers statewide, this decline in conservation significantly impacted the state average for October residential water savings. Other areas held steady or even increased their conservation efforts in October compared to September.



The State Water Board announced a half-day Southern California water conservation workshop to be held on Dec. 17, when the State Water Board travels to the Los Angeles region for its second December board meeting. The workshop is intended to solicit suggestions on what, if any, additional conservation measures should be adopted in 2015 to increase water conservation statewide.

“Heading into 2015, our reservoirs remain at historic lows and our snowpack is a fraction of what we need, so the stakes are even higher than this time last year,” Marcus said. “We’ll hope for sustained rain and snow, especially snow, but have to plan as if it will be another dry year--until it’s not. Every drop saved today will be a treasure later if it doesn’t rain enough.”

Water conservation efforts reached a peak of 11.6 percent of water savings in August, compared with August 2013 water use. Statistically, California urban water use is generally the highest June through October.

Decline in Per Capita Daily Water Use Is Promising

A new reporting requirement, called residential gallons per-capita per day (R-GPCD), which estimates daily water use by residential customers for nearly 400 urban water agencies statewide alongside the monthly conservation data, indicates communities continue to use less water.

Data for September showed statewide average use of 123 gallon per person, per day. October data indicates the statewide average dropped to 109 gallons per person, per day, which is most likely due to lower outdoor water use as the state moves into cooler fall months.

The water use reports are a requirement of the Emergency Water Conservation Regulation adopted by the State Water Board in July and will be provided to the Board monthly by urban water suppliers, along with total water conservation for each month. The complete report is posted [here](#).

According to the R-GPCD data, water use varies widely by hydrologic region and showed consistent declines in water use, during this second month of reporting. At the low end, the North Coast region averaged 72 gallons per person per day. On the high end, the Colorado River region averaged 211 gallons per person per day.

Statewide Water Conservation Rate Declines in October

Water conservation statewide monthly year over year percentage has declined in September and October after a steady rise since June. The water conservation rate climbed to 11.6 percent in August, a substantial increase from 7.5 percent conservation in July and 4 percent in June. But for September, the conservation rate dipped to 10.6 percent and dropped again to

just 6.7 percent in October. The water conservation rate is a comparison of the amount of water produced in the reporting month with the same month one year ago.

Compliance with the mandatory reporting requirement is steady, with 399 (97 percent) of urban water suppliers, representing about 34 million Californians, now reporting.

The report also found that in October, 91 percent of the water agencies reporting had instituted outdoor water use restrictions, a three percentage point increase from the September reporting period. Outdoor water use restrictions are a key requirement for urban water suppliers under the [Emergency Water Conservation Regulation](#) because outdoor watering accounts for as much as 80 percent of urban water use in some areas.

Between June and October, about 90 billion gallons, or 276 thousand acre feet of water, were saved compared to last year.

Collectively that's about enough water to supply 1.2 million Californians for an entire year. An acre foot of water can supply the annual average water needs for two families a year.

Background

In his Jan. 17, 2014, Emergency Drought Proclamation, Governor Brown called for Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 20 percent. The trend of increasing reductions and specific local data shows that many California communities have met and exceeded the call to conserve, but more can and must be done to protect water supplies should the drought persist. Current forecasts indicate that Californians cannot count upon a wet winter to end the drought.

The State Water Board will closely monitor the implementation of the regulations and the weather over the coming months to determine if further restrictions are needed.

The Emergency Water Conservation Regulation will be in effect until April 25, 2015, and may be extended if drought conditions persist.

Visit SaveOurWater.com to find out how everyone can do their part, and visit Drought.CA.Gov to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.