



Media Release

CALIFORNIANS SAVE 1.19 MILLION ACRE-FEET OF WATER, ENOUGH TO SUPPLY NEARLY 6 MILLION PEOPLE FOR A YEAR

***CALIFORNIA ACHIEVES 96 PERCENT OF STATEWIDE CONSERVATION GOAL,
NARROWLY MISSING GOVERNOR'S NINE MONTH MANDATE***

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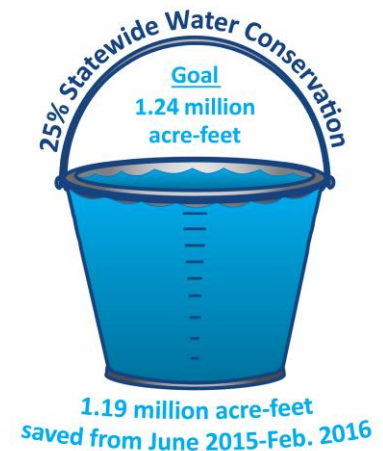
SACRAMENTO – Californians came just shy of meeting Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.'s 25 percent water conservation mandate for the nine months since mandatory urban conservation began. Statewide cumulative savings from June 2015 to February 2016 totaled 23.9 percent compared with the same months in 2013.

“Twenty-four percent savings shows enormous effort and a recognition that everyone’s effort matters,” said State Water Resources Control Board Chair Felicia Marcus. “Californians rose to the occasion, reducing irrigation, fixing leaks, taking shorter showers, and saving our precious water resources in all sorts of ways.”

With nearly 1.19 million acre-feet of water conserved from June 2015 through February 2016, the state achieved 96 percent of the savings goal of 1.24 million acre-feet of water. Water saved during the nine month period is enough to supply more than 5.9 million Californians for one year; this is approximately the combined population of San Diego, Riverside, and Tulare counties, or 15 percent of the state’s population.

Statewide, the conservation rate dropped from 17.1 percent in January to 12 percent in February, likely because February 2016 was one of the warmest and driest Februaries since the drought began. In addition, residents generally use much less water for outdoor irrigation in the winter months, so there is less opportunity for high volume, and percentage, savings.

As the wet season draws to a close in April – and with water suppliers, residents, and businesses posing important questions about the future of water conservation in California – the State Water Board will hold a public [workshop](#) on April 20 to receive input on conservation



needs through the summer. The workshop will consider adjustments to the current emergency regulations given available water supply, storage, and snowpack.

In the meantime, Californians are urged to continue applying their water conservation skills and habits through the spring months. These efforts should include complying with urban water supplier directives on when outdoor irrigation is permitted, not irrigating outdoors during and within 48 hours following a rain event, and fixing leaks that are discovered during individual water user audits.

“March brought us much needed rain and snow after a frightening February,” Chair Marcus said. “It was more of a moderate March than the miracle March we hoped for, but we’re grateful for every raindrop and every snowflake, and we are still hoping for more April showers. We are in better shape than last year, but are still below average in most of California. We need to keep up our efforts to conserve the water we’ve gotten. We can better tune up and adjust our emergency rules once we see our final rain and snowpack tallies in the next few weeks.”

An [updated and extended emergency regulation](#) was adopted by the Board on Feb. 2 and took effect Feb. 11. The regulation extends restrictions on urban water use through October while providing urban water suppliers some latitude in the conservation requirements they must meet. The action follows Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.’s Nov. 13, 2015, [Executive Order](#) directing the State Water Board to extend the emergency water conservation regulation through Oct. 31, 2016 should drought conditions persist.

February Conservation Data

- For June through February, the cumulative statewide reduction was 23.9 percent, compared to the same months in 2013. That equates to nearly 1.19 million acre-feet of water saved, putting the state 96 percent of the way to meeting the 1.24 million acre-feet savings goal set for the end of February.
- Statewide water savings for February 2016 was 12 percent (41,591 acre feet or 13.6 billion gallons), a decrease from January 2016’s 17.1 percent savings. See fact sheet [here](#).
- February 2016 compliance indicates that 55 percent of suppliers met their conservation standards.

Water Conservation Quick Links

[Factsheet: February by the Numbers](#)

[June 2014 - February 2016 Data Set](#)

[Cumulative Savings and Conservation Compliance for February](#)

- Statewide average water use for February was 67 residential gallons per capita per day (R-GPCD), closely matching the December 2015 average but higher than January's all-time low of 61 gallons per person per day.

Enforcement

The State Water Board's Office of Enforcement continues to work with water suppliers that are not meeting their conservation standards, and with small water suppliers that have not filed their December 2015 report.

Since June 2015 the State Water Board has issued:

- 98 warning letters;
- 118 notices of violation;
- 12 conservation orders (one was rescinded due to compliance);
- Four Administrative Civil Liability Complaints (one ACL paid; three in negotiations); and
- Seven alternative compliance orders.

Background

In his April 1, 2015 [Executive Order](#), Gov. Brown mandated a 25 percent water use reduction by users of urban water supplies across California. In May 2015, the State Water Board adopted an emergency regulation requiring an immediate 25 percent reduction in overall potable urban water use. The regulation uses a sliding scale for setting conservation standards, so that communities that have already reduced their R-GPCD through past conservation will have lower mandates than those that have not made such gains since the last major drought.

On Feb. 2, 2016, based on Gov. Brown's [November 2015 Executive Order](#), the State Water Board approved an updated and extended emergency regulation that will continue mandatory reductions through October, unless revised before then. The extended regulation responds to calls for continuing the conservation structure that has spurred such dramatic savings so far while providing greater consideration of some factors that influence water use: climate, population growth and significant investments in new local, drought-resilient water supplies such as wastewater reuse and desalination. Under the extended regulation, statewide water conservation is expected to continue at the high levels Californians have been achieving since June 2015.

The State Water Board tracks water conservation for each of the state's larger urban water suppliers (those with more than 3,000 connections) on a monthly basis, but compliance with individual water supplier conservation requirements and the statewide 25 percent mandate is based on cumulative savings. Cumulative tracking means that conservation savings will be

added together from one month to the next and compared to the amount of water used during the same months in 2013.

California has been dealing with the effects of an unprecedented 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. Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com. While saving water, it is important to properly water trees. Find out how at www.saveourwater.com/trees. In addition to many effective local programs, state-funded turf removal and toilet replacement rebates are also available. Information and rebate applications can be found at: www.saveourwaterrebates.com/.

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