



# Media Release

## **CALIFORNIANS CONTINUE MEETING GOVERNOR'S WATER CONSERVATION MANDATE SAVINGS MUST CONTINUE TO REACH FEBRUARY 2016 GOAL**

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**SACRAMENTO** – Californians reduced water use by nearly 27 percent during August, exceeding Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.'s 25 percent conservation mandate for a third straight month.

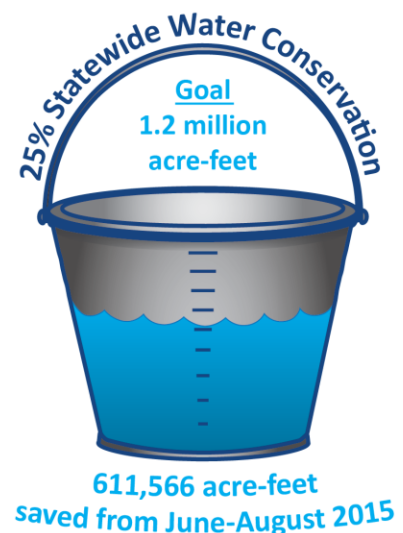
“Millions of Californians stepped up to save water this summer and we must all keep up the good work because no one knows how much longer this historic drought will continue,” said Felicia Marcus, Chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. “With continued heat, the danger of more wildfires, and no way of knowing when the drought will end, every drop of water that remains in our local reservoirs and aquifers is insurance in case of another dry year or more.”

While August's conservation was good, July was better. August conservation rate was down from July's record effort of 31.4 percent water savings. And as California enters the cool fall months, when water use traditionally drops, overall savings will likely be more incremental.

Cumulative savings for the summer, despite hot and dry conditions, puts the state half-way to meeting its goal of 1.2 million acre-feet of water saved by February 2016. State Water Resources Control Board officials stressed that it will take persistence on the part of urban water users, now and into winter, to meet this goal.

Residential water users are urged to keep up their efforts to conserve and comply with urban water supplier directives to switch to fall watering schedules of once a week or less -- to maintain water conservation through the winter.

For June, July, and August the cumulative statewide savings rate was 28.7 percent. That equates to 611,566 acre-feet of water saved -- 51 percent of the overall goal of saving 1.2 million acre-feet from June 2015 to February 2016, as called for by the Governor in his April 1 [Executive Order](#).



Saving water in the hot summer months is critical to meeting the goal, as summer is when the greatest amount of water is traditionally used, particularly on outdoor ornamental landscapes.

Conservation programs put in place during the late spring and early summer months by most of the state's water suppliers are now in full swing, yielding dramatic reductions in water use and a reexamination of personal habits related to water. In addition to many effective local programs, state-funded turf removal and toilet replacement rebates are also now available. Information and rebate applications are available at: [www.saveourwaterrebates.com/](http://www.saveourwaterrebates.com/).

With dry conditions forecast to continue through November, the focus remains not only on enhancing current efforts, but on encouraging suppliers that are behind to make the commitment to conservation and meet or beat their targets.

The [emergency water conservation regulation](#) requires urban water suppliers to save a targeted amount of water based upon their usage levels (those who already use less per capita have lower targets) and to provide monthly water use reports to the State Water Board. Urban water suppliers are expected to meet, or exceed, their [individual conservation standard](#) starting in June and continuing through February 2016. The year 2013 serves as the baseline for determining water savings statewide. The current report is posted [here](#).

## August Highlights

- The percent of water saved by the State's large urban suppliers decreased from 31.4 percent in July to 27 percent in August, compared to 2013. A four percentage point decrease in conservation is concerning; however, the 27 percent monthly savings is still above the 25 percent target, and more than twice the 12 percent saved for the same month in 2014. August 2015 was also hotter and drier than July 2015, when record-breaking rains made it easier for some to conserve water outdoors.
- The amount of water saved in August (63.3 billion gallons) is more than twice the amount of water saved in August 2014 (28.4 billion gallons), when the State's voluntary 20 percent conservation goal was in effect.
- Statewide, the average water use for August was 102 residential gallons per capita per day (R-GPCD), up slightly from July (98 R-GPCD), but significantly lower than residential water use for August 2014 (123 R-GPCD). Large urban water supplier R-GPCDs ranged from 37 to 393 gallons.
- Statewide, suppliers reported 92,584 compliance enforcement actions for August, which is similar to the 92,640 actions reported in July. While formal warnings increased, penalties decreased in August, as compared to July.

See the how the hydrologic regions did for the month of August [here](#).

## Compliance Statistics

August saw a decrease in compliance from water suppliers as compared to July's dramatic increase. With 406 water supplier reports submitted for August, 291 suppliers (72 percent) met or were within 1 percentage point of their conservation standard; 55 suppliers (14 percent) were between 1 and 5 percentage points of meeting their conservation standard; and 54 suppliers (13 percent) were between 5 and 15 percentage points of meeting their conservation standard.

There were six suppliers (1 percent) in August reporting that they were more than 15 percentage points away from meeting their conservation standard. However, two of these six are under an alternate compliance order, while two more are under a conservation order. Compliance data can be found [here](#). Compliance with the standard itself is cumulative rather than monthly, but compliance with information and conservation orders is shorter term. State Water Board staff continues to communicate with urban water suppliers that continue to fall short of established conservation benchmarks in an effort to understand the localized conservation challenge.

## Enforcement Efforts by State Water Board

All water suppliers that did not meet their July conservation standard were contacted following the release of the July data, and follow-up calls are being made to those suppliers who appear to have suffered declines in compliance during August. Many suppliers are required to provide information about their existing conservation programs and the steps they are taking to boost conservation.

Conservation orders are being issued to those water suppliers that are far behind and do not have the programs in place to meet their standard. The orders require those suppliers to take specific actions that other suppliers have already taken or face penalties. The Office of Enforcement is targeting its compliance efforts on those urban water suppliers furthest from meeting their conservation standard.

Since June, the Office of Enforcement has issued **eight conservation orders, 92 information orders, and 66 warning letters** to suppliers based on their monthly compliance priority. The Office of Enforcement is evaluating supplier responses to information orders and meeting with them, as needed, to discuss the circumstances preventing the supplier from achieving their conservation standard and the actions that can be taken to get them into compliance. It is anticipated that more conservation and information orders will be issued in the coming weeks.

To date, **six alternate compliance orders** have been issued to urban water suppliers in response to confirmed industrial water, and health and safety needs. Two alternate compliance orders are still pending. Conservation orders and alternate compliance orders are posted on

the enforcement page of the Water Boards' Water Conservation Portal [here](#). A fact sheet on compliance can be found [here](#).

## **Local Enforcement and Education Programs Continue Ramping Up**

Water suppliers reported that while their August statistics demonstrate that the number of complaints and warnings may be leveling off, awareness continues to grow as the local programs mature.

- 38,601 water waste complaints were reported statewide (by 379 suppliers) – compared with 38,882 complaints reported in July (by 385 suppliers);
- 39,008 formal warnings were issued for water waste statewide (by 330 suppliers) -- compared with 37,471 formal warnings in July (by 329 suppliers); and
- 14,975 penalties were issued statewide (by 84 suppliers) -- compared with 16,287 penalties issued in July (by 82 suppliers).

Warnings and penalties not only draw attention to water wasting activities and undetected leaks, but they also complement local outreach and education programs to reduce water use. Water suppliers have stepped up their communications considerably in the last two months and are extending their education programs to cover other drought-related needs, such as irrigation and mulching practices to [maintain healthy trees](#) while limiting water for ornamental landscapes.

The August urban water supplier enforcement statistics can be found [here](#).

## **August's Top Performers**

Stand-out communities during August maintained or surpassed their July conservation savings. The list of top performers includes Joshua Basin Water District (Colorado River), Crescent City (North Coast), and the City of Red Bluff (Sacramento River). These high achievers continue to represent both inland and coastal communities, proving that significant savings can be achieved wherever you are. Suppliers demonstrating remarkable performance included:

- **City of Morgan Hill** – reduced water use by 42.5 percent in August, bringing the City's cumulative savings to 40.2 percent, well over its 28 percent conservation standard.
- **City of El Monte** - reduced water use by 22.9 percent in August, bringing the City's cumulative savings to 15.9 percent, twice its 8 percent conservation standard
- **City of Lakewood**– reduced water use by 30 percent in August, bringing the City's cumulative savings to 29 percent, well over its 20 percent conservation standard.

- **California Water Service Company Selma** – reduced water use by 40.0 percent in August, bringing the supplier’s cumulative savings to 41.5 percent, well over its 32 percent conservation standard.

## **Background**

In his April 1 [Executive Order](#), Gov. Brown mandated a 25 percent water use reduction for cities and towns across California.

In May, 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.

Each month, the State Water Board compares every urban water supplier’s water use with their use for the same month in 2013 to determine if they are on track for meeting their conservation standard. Local water agencies determine the most cost effective and locally appropriate way to achieve their standard. The State Water Board will work closely with water suppliers to implement the regulation and improve local efforts that are falling short.

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](#).

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