



Media Release

Worsening conditions prompt readoption of drought emergency regulation for Scott and Shasta Rivers

State Water Board authorizes curtailments to ensure minimum flows

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SACRAMENTO – With historic dry conditions continuing in the Scott and Shasta Rivers, the State Water Resources Control Board today readopted and updated an emergency curtailment regulation that includes measures to protect imperiled fish, ensures supplies for human health and livestock needs and encourages voluntary efforts that may be used in lieu of curtailments.

Curtailments in the Scott River currently are suspended but expected to be reimposed this summer. In the Shasta River, curtailments of water rights acquired after 1912 were reinstated March 15. There are approximately 3,500 combined water rights in the watersheds, but given expanded conservation efforts and an unpredictable hydrology, the number of right holders who may be curtailed is yet to be determined.

“Amendments in the regulation adopted today provide opportunities for right holders to shoulder the response to this crisis more evenly through local cooperative solutions as alternatives to curtailments,” said Erin Ragazzi, an assistant deputy director with the Division of Water Rights. “Just as importantly, they also facilitate opportunities to extend a problem-solving dialogue among stakeholders so that we can develop long-term solutions for the coming years.”

Changes to the original regulation – which would have expired in August – clarify emergency drought requirements, update the minimum flow levels based on recommendations from the [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#), extend the inefficient livestock watering ban through March and include a local cooperative solution for livestock diversions during the prohibition period.

The Scott and Shasta Rivers are tributaries to the Klamath River and supply water for agriculture, domestic users, the environment, municipalities, tribal nations and recreation. The watersheds also are important nurseries for federally threatened and state-threatened coho salmon, culturally and commercially significant Chinook salmon and culturally important steelhead trout.

Temporarily halting diversions will leave more water instream to meet minimum needs for human health and safety, fish and livestock.



The State Water Board issued the initial curtailment orders in the Scott and Shasta watersheds on Sept. 9-10, 2021. Amid continued acute conditions and prolonged drought, the Department of Fish and Wildlife on April 20 asked the board to readopt the emergency regulation.

Additional revisions include administrative improvements and updated definitions and exceptions.

The State Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources and drinking water for protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper resource allocation and efficient use for present and future generations.