



Media Release

Statewide Water Savings Exceed 19 Percent in October; Most of State Still Experiencing Drought Conditions

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 6, 2016

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SACRAMENTO — The State Water Resources Control Board today announced that urban Californians' monthly water conservation was 19.5 percent in October, up from 18.3 percent in September and a bit below the 22.3 percent savings in October 2015, when state-mandated conservation targets were in place. The State Water Board stressed the need for continued conservation despite early rains in Northern California.

The cumulative statewide savings from June 2015 through October 2016 was 22.8 percent, compared with the same months in 2013. Since June 2015, 2.26 million acre-feet of water has been saved — enough water to supply more than 11 million people, or more than one-quarter the state's 38 million population, for a year.

Although October and November rains in Northern California provided an encouraging start to the 2016-2017 water year (Oct. 1, 2016 – Sept. 30, 2017), 73 percent of the state remains in drought conditions. The State Water Board will continue to monitor conservation levels and water supply conditions, and will consider a staff proposal to extend emergency conservation regulations in January. The proposal may include a return to state-mandated conservation targets if dry conditions return or if conservation levels slip significantly.

"Californians' continued commitment to conservation shows they don't take water for granted anymore," said State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus. "With climate change playing an increasingly disruptive role, we need to save where we can, when we can. Coupled with recycling, stormwater recapture and other measures, it will extend our local water resilience."

"It's good to see improvement in conservation in areas that had slipped, particularly in northern California, whether that was because of rain or other reasons, even though they have better supplies than in previous years," Marcus added.



Conservation Data

- Statewide water savings for October was 19.5 percent (111,409 acre feet or 36.3 billion gallons), an increase from September's 18.3 percent savings. The gap in savings compared with the same month a year earlier -- October 2015's 22.2 percent savings (41.8 billion gallons) -- was smaller than during the preceding few months. October 2016 water savings were 13 percent lower than October 2015.
- Cumulative statewide percent reduction for June 2015 – October 2016 (seventeen months) was 22.8 percent, which equates to 2,259,111 acre-feet (736.1 billion gallons).
- Statewide average water use was 89.5 residential gallons per capita per day (R-GPCD) for October, below the 106.4 R-GPCD in September 2016 and slightly above the 87.2 R-GPCD reported for October 2015. See the October fact sheet [here](#). [All October data can be found on the conservation reporting page](#).

Conservation levels have remained significant for many communities that had certified that they did not need state-imposed mandates to keep conserving.

Under the board's revised [emergency water conservation regulations](#), urban water agencies have the ability to identify their own conservation standards based on a "stress test" of supply reliability. Water suppliers had to document that they have sufficient supplies to withstand three years of continuous drought or take additional measures that include state-imposed mandatory conservation standards. The regulation is in effect through January 2017. Those stress test results are [here](#).

In October, about half of suppliers achieved water savings above 20 percent. These 196 suppliers serve more than fourteen million people, and include East Bay Municipal Utilities District, San Jose Water Company, Sacramento, Alameda County Water District, Modesto, California-American Water Company Sacramento District, Contra Costa Water District, Huntington Beach, Marin Municipal Water District, Sacramento County Water Agency, Stockton, Sacramento Suburban Water District, Santa Rosa, and California Water Service Company Stockton.

Additionally, many water suppliers showed October 2016 conservation levels that were even higher than October 2015 levels, including Sunnyvale, Victorville Water District, Daly City, Redding, Vacaville, Casitas Municipal Water District, Hillsborough, Estero Municipal Improvement District, Morgan Hill, Wasco, and Fruitridge Vista Water Company.

In looking at the data, percentage savings alone do not tell a complete story of conservation achievement. Suppliers with already low R-GPCD use are taking more significant efforts to

save water with small percentage reductions than big users of water for whom it easier to save water, particularly on outdoor ornamental landscapes. Despite less than 10 percent water savings in October 2016, examples of communities with low R-GPCD and already significant conservation and efficiency achievements include San Diego, Golden State Water Company (Florence Graham), Seal Beach, and Hi-Desert Water District.

However, not all suppliers are sustaining significant conservation. State Water Board staff continues to look at why conservation levels have dropped in these communities, and is particularly concerned about suppliers with extremely high levels of per-capita water use. Suppliers with high R-GPCD levels and sharp reductions in conservation include: Vaughn Water Company, Valley Water Company, LA County Waterworks District 29 (Malibu), Coachella Valley Water District, and Myoma Dunes Mutual Water Company.

Some communities continue to maintain low overall per capita residential water use, which may not be reflected in percentage change, but illustrates a long-term commitment to efficient water use.

For instance, Mammoth Community Water District, Golden State Water Company Florence Graham, Humboldt Community Service District, Paramount, McKinleyville Community Service District, Arcata, Crescent City, Seal Beach, and Hi-Desert Water District are examples of communities saving less than 10 percent in October 2016, yet the daily per capita use is already well below what a city in the Sacramento Region may be using on a daily basis. For agency data on water savings and average daily use, visit [here](#).

Status of Permanent Water Use Efficiency Targets Effort

The current conservation regulation, adopted in May, is part of a wider effort to build on short-term, emergency water restrictions to establish permanent conservation measures that improve long-term drought preparedness and eliminate the worst water-wasting practices. These actions will help achieve a top priority of the state's Water Action Plan - to "Make Conservation a California Way of Life."

In May, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. issued an [executive order](#) calling for new permanent water use efficiency targets for each urban water supplier that reflect California's diverse climate, landscape, and demographic conditions. The local "stress test" data and three-year resiliency plans collected by the State Water Board will serve as a bridge to these actions and inform the development of new water use efficiency targets.

On Nov.30, the State Water Board along with four other state agencies released a [draft framework](#) for implementing the executive order. The new plan's fundamental premise is that

efficient water use helps all of California better prepare for longer and more severe droughts caused by climate change.

The framework develops long-term water conservation measures that will ensure all communities have sufficient water supplies. This will involve activities such as permanently banning wasteful practices like hosing off sidewalks and driveways and ensuring farmers plan and prepare for severe drought.

Background

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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