



Media Release

Statewide Water Savings Surpass 20 Percent in January;
Weather Extremes Are California's Reality Under Climate Change

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2017

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SACRAMENTO — The State Water Resources Control Board today announced that urban Californians' monthly water conservation was 20.5 percent in January, an increase from the 17.2 percent savings in January 2016, when state-mandated conservation targets were in place.

The cumulative statewide savings from June 2015 through January 2017 remains at 22.5 percent, compared with the same months in 2013. Since June 2015, 2.51 million acre-feet of water has been saved - enough water to supply more than 12.5 million people - approaching a third of the state's population - for a year.



After five years of extreme drought, this winter has generated record precipitation and caused flooding in multiple locations. This swing from extreme dry to extreme wet conditions is becoming increasingly frequent due to climate change. Today, the State Water Board adopted a [resolution](#) to address climate change impacts, including enhanced protection of vulnerable communities and infrastructure from droughts, floods, and sea level rise.

"Californians continue to conserve despite the wet weather in many areas," said State Water Board Chair Felicia Marcus. "This ongoing effort is important rain or shine for all sorts of reasons, in light of the greater extremes we can expect with climate change and increasingly weird weather. We're going to need to use all our tools including conservation and efficiency, water recycling, stormwater capture, and storing water above and below ground in wet times to get us through the dry times to deal with the Mack truck of climate change that has already arrived.

"Californians' understand that ongoing water conservation benefits everyone, and we are grateful that people have not forgotten five years of devastating drought now that our reservoirs are overflowing."



Conservation Data

- Statewide water savings for January 2017 was 20.5 percent (74,249 acre-feet or 24.2 billion gallons), a slight decrease from December 2016's 20.6 percent savings, and an increase from January 2016's 17.2 percent statewide savings (20.6 billion gallons).
- Cumulative statewide percent reduction for June 2015 through January 2017 (twenty months) is 22.5 percent, which equates to 2,510,387 acre-feet (818 billion gallons).
- Statewide average water use for January 2017 was 58.1 residential gallons per capita per day (R-GPCD), the lowest R-GPCD reported to date (below the 61 R-GPCD reported for January 2016).
- See the January fact sheet [here](#). [All January data can be found on this page](#).

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

In February, the Board extended its existing water conservation regulations, which prohibit wasteful practices, such as watering lawns right after rain, and set a conservation mandate only for urban water suppliers that could not demonstrate they have enough water reserves to withstand an additional three dry years. Those supply reliability "stress test" results are [here](#). The Board plans to revisit the conservation regulation in May.

Status of Permanent Water Use Efficiency Targets

In May 2016, 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" supply reliability data 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, 2016, 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 prohibiting wasteful practices like hosing off sidewalks and driveways and ensuring farmers plan and prepare for severe drought. A final report with recommendations is expected by late spring.

Background

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 continue to 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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