
State Water Resources Control Board

April 2, 2015

To All Water Right Holders

CURTAILMENT OF WATER RIGHT DIVERSIONS EXPECTED SOON

With continuing dry conditions and record low snowpack, many water right holders in the Central Valley and elsewhere in the State are facing very difficult spring planting decisions. The amount of water needed for irrigation is a critical part of that decision making process and the State Water Board wants to make sure that future water supply availability is an important consideration.

As everyone is aware, very warm temperatures and low precipitation have continued to plague the State and we find ourselves now in a fourth year of drought. Since the January 23, 2015 Notice of Surface Water Shortage and Potential for Curtailment, it is clear that restrictions of surface water diversions will occur in key watersheds. If dry conditions persist through the spring, it is anticipated that all holders of post-1914 and many holders of pre-1914 water rights in certain watersheds will receive curtailment notices soon as inflows due to snowmelt and possible future rainfall recede and the last opportunities to collect water to storage are past. Continuing dry conditions in some watersheds will also likely mean that riparian water rights holders will be required to reduce their diversions and share what supplies of natural flow remain, if any.

In the coming days, forecasts of water availability will be updated for many of the watersheds and posted on the State Water Board's website at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/drought/analysis/. Please carefully consider this information as it will estimate the timing of curtailments for the various classes of water right holders.

These are very difficult times and many of you have already experienced tremendous hardship due to the ongoing drought conditions. If you are in a water short area, you should plan to rely on alternative water supplies for your water needs if they are available. Alternative supplies include groundwater wells, purchased stored water supplies under contractual arrangements, and recycled wastewater. Water right holders are cautioned that groundwater resources are significantly depleted in some areas. Water right holders in these areas are urged to carefully consider this information and make planting and other decisions accordingly.