



Update on Dry Conditions

Background

Water years 2012 and 2013 were dry especially in parts of the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California, and the lack of precipitation in the first part of this winter has increased concerns about the impacts on farms, communities and businesses. Current conditions include:

- Water levels in many of California's major reservoirs are well below their historical averages. As of January 7, 2014 Lake Oroville was 57% of its historical average, Lake Shasta was 56% of average, and San Luis Reservoir was 43% of average (graph attached).
- The season's first DWR snow survey recorded the snowpack's statewide water content at 20% of average for this time of year.
- In November 2013, DWR announced the initial allocation to State Water Project contractors would be just 5% of requested amounts because of reduced carryover storage and uncertainties about precipitation.
- Many of California's state and federal lawmakers have called for action to mitigate the harmful effects of potential drought. A recent letter from Senator Feinstein and Congressman Costa (attached) urged Governor Brown to declare a drought emergency in California, activate the State Emergency Plan, and suspend some regulatory requirements that could help increase water availability. At the January 7, 2014 meeting of the California Food and Agriculture Board meeting, growers and water district officials called on the Governor to proclaim a drought emergency to provide assistance to the agriculture industry and its workers.

In response to dry conditions, DWR recently named a drought team and outlined a series of actions DWR will take to help mitigate negative impacts from reduced water supplies. Governor Brown has also convened an interagency Drought Task Force to assess California's preparedness and whether a drought declaration is necessary.

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Bill Croyle, DWR Drought Manager, will update the Commission on dry conditions, potential impacts, and actions that State agencies are taking and to address dry conditions.

Attachments

Reservoir Storage Graph
Letter from Senator Feinstein and Congressman Costa, dated December 9, 2013
DWR Press Release regarding the Drought Management Team

Contact

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