



GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS DROUGHT, ORDERS IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ADDRESS SITUATION

Today, following two consecutive years of below-average rainfall, very low snowmelt runoff and the largest court-ordered water transfer restrictions in state history, Governor Schwarzenegger will proclaim a statewide drought and issue an Executive Order directing immediate state action to deal with the crisis. With increasingly dry conditions statewide, communities are now mandating water conservation and rationing, fire danger has grown, agriculture is facing catastrophic crop losses, urban and rural economies have been harmed due to development restrictions and drought conditions could degrade water quality in some regions. Last month, the final Department of Water Resources (DWR) snow survey of 2008 showed snowpack water content at only 67 percent of normal and the runoff forecast at only 55 percent of normal and conditions continue to worsen across California.

At 11:15 a.m. the Governor's remarks will be webcast live at www.gov.ca.gov. For more information on the Governor's commitment to protecting California's water future visit: www.gov.ca.gov/issue/water-supply.

To help address California's water crisis, today's Executive Order directs DWR to:

- Expedite existing grant programs to help local water districts and agencies conserve. DWR will expedite existing grant programs to support local water district and agency water conservation programs and projects that can be implemented to ease drought conditions right away.
- Facilitate water transfers to respond to emergency shortages across the state. DWR will facilitate water transfers in 2008 to timely respond to potential emergency shortages and prepare to operate a dry year water purchasing program in 2009.
- Work with local water districts and agencies to improve coordination. DWR and the Department of Public Health (DPH) will work with locals to evaluate system interconnections, review mutual aid agreements, and correct any deficiencies that restrict water movement in an emergency.
- Help local water districts and agencies improve water efficiency. DWR will provide technical assistance to help locals improve landscape and agricultural irrigation efficiencies and leak detection.
- Coordinate with state, federal and local partners to assist water suppliers, identify potential risks to water supply and help farmers suffering losses. DWR will:
 - Work with DPH to prioritize processing of loan and grant contracts for water suppliers and public water systems demonstrating drought-related hardships.
 - Coordinate with the Office of Emergency Services, local offices of emergency services and the California Public Utilities Commission to identify and address any water systems at risk of experiencing health and safety impacts and water delivery limitations.
 - Work with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to identify potential federal funding for local water agencies and farmers to facilitate the rapid installation of best available irrigation management and conservation systems.
 - Work with CDFA, county Agricultural Commissioners and others as necessary to identify and gather data on crop losses and other adverse economic impacts caused by the drought.

This Executive Order also encourages local water districts and agencies to promote water conservation. Locals are encouraged to work cooperatively at the regional and state level to take aggressive, immediate action to reduce water consumption for the remainder of 2008 and to prepare for water conditions that could worsen in 2009. As part of the Executive Order, DWR will work with locals to conduct an aggressive water conservation and outreach campaign. All Californians must do their part to save water.

This crisis underscores the need for a comprehensive upgrade to California's water infrastructure. Comprehensive water infrastructure improvements are vital to protecting our environment, economy and quality of

life. The longer we wait; the worse the situation becomes. That is why the Governor has proposed the following [comprehensive plan](#) as part of his 2008-09 budget:

- [Water Storage](#): \$3.5 billion dedicated to the development of additional storage to offset the climate change impacts of reduced snow pack and higher flood flows.
- [Delta Sustainability](#): \$2.4 billion to help implement a sustainable resource management plan for the Delta.
- [Water Resources Stewardship](#): \$1.1 billion to implement river restoration projects.
- [Water Conservation](#): \$3.1 billion to increase water use efficiency.
- [Water Quality Improvement](#): \$1.1 billion for efforts to reduce the contamination of groundwater.
- [Other Critical Water Projects](#): \$700 million for water recycling, hillside restoration for areas devastated by fire and removal of fish barriers on key rivers and streams.

The Governor is committed to gaining consensus on a bipartisan legislative solution for California's future.

- In February, Governor Schwarzenegger sent a [letter](#) to Senators Perata, Steinberg, and Machado clarifying the administrative actions under consideration as part of a comprehensive solution in the Delta.
- Also in February, the Governor [hosted a meeting](#) with Senator Feinstein, legislative leaders and key stakeholders to discuss rebuilding California's water infrastructure.
- In December 2007, the Governor [applauded the work of the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force](#) and committed to continuing to work with legislative leaders on a comprehensive water infrastructure solution.
- In September 2007, the Governor [introduced a comprehensive water infrastructure proposal](#) during the legislative special session, building on the plan he introduced in [January 2007](#) with the 2007-08 budget.
- In July 2007, the Governor [directed DWR to take immediate action](#) to improve conditions in the Delta, to help restore its natural habitat and protect the Delta smelt and other species.

On the Record:

Association of California Water Agencies Executive Director Timothy Quinn – “I Have Not Seen A More Serious Water Situation In My Career”: “I have not seen a more serious water situation in my career, and I've been doing this 30 years...This is a harbinger of relatively tough times, not just for this year but for a set of years.” (Deborah Schoch, “Water shortage worst in decades, official says,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 5/2/08)

Los Angeles Department Of Water And Power General Manager H. David Nahai – “We're All Facing A Worrisome Water Picture”: “Los Angeles traditionally has gotten 30% to 60% of its water from the Eastern Sierra via the Los Angeles Aqueduct, but it still buys water imported from the north and east. ‘I think we're all facing a worrisome water picture,’ said H. David Nahai, general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.” (Deborah Schoch, “Water shortage worst in decades, official says,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 5/2/08)

East Bay Municipal Utility District – “Mandatory Water Rationing Is Now In Effect”: “Two dry winters have resulted in the biggest water supply threat to EBMUD in nearly 20 years. The District received roughly half of its normal runoff this year and projects its water storage will be over 200,000 acre-feet short of the water desired by October 1 of this year (the beginning of a new rain year). To safeguard its shrinking supply, EBMUD has declared a severe water shortage emergency. Mandatory water rationing is now in effect.” (East Bay Municipal Water District, “EBMUD Adopts Drought Management Program: Mandatory Rationing in Effect,” [Website](#), 5/13/08)

- **East Bay Municipal Utility District Spokesman Brian McCrea – “This Is The Worst Situation We've Seen In Almost 20 Years”** (Ryan Flinn, “California Utility Imposes First Water Rationing in 16 Years,” [Bloomberg](#), 5/14/08)

Metropolitan Water District Of Southern California Spokesman Bob Muir – “If Water Use Is Not Cut... The Region Will More Likely Be In A Shortage And Instituting Rationing”: “The agency that provides about half of the 720 billion gallons of water consumed in Orange County each year is considering issuing a water supply alert, a step toward possible water rationing... ‘A ‘water supply alert’ does not mean less water being supplied; it means that the water being supplied is severely depleting reserves, and that if water use is not cut to help balance the use of reserves, the region will more likely be in a shortage and instituting rationing,’ Bob Muir, an MWD spokesman, said in an e-mail.” (Gary Robbins, “O.C. could face water rationing next year,” [Orange County Register](#), 5/29/08)

Westlands Water District General Manger Tom Birmingham – “This Is A Crisis That Has To Be Fixed Now”: “‘Half the people in this room are going to go broke,’ said at a meeting that drew about 400 to the fairgrounds in Los Banos. ‘This is a crisis that has to be fixed now.’” (Dennis Pollock, “Feds reduce water to Valley farms,” [Fresno Bee](#), 6/2/08)