

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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TO: State Water Project Contractors

SUBJECT: Water Conservation Actions for 2023

California is in its third consecutive year of extreme drought. With next year's conditions uncertain, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is taking actions to prepare for the possibility of a fourth dry year. While these actions will benefit the State's drought response, all Californians must do their part to reduce water use.

DWR has sought and received temporary modifications to Delta water quality standards to conserve water supplies in upstream reservoirs for needs later in the year. DWR has also installed a salinity barrier in the Delta, which will keep saltwater from infiltrating the limited freshwater supply in the system. DWR is also coordinating with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on planning and operations of the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project. To preserve water for critical purposes next year DWR also made the difficult decision of reducing SWP and Feather River water allocations for 2022.

While these actions have helped preserve the State's water supply, Water Year 2023 will still begin with substantially reduced storage in Lake Oroville. Local supplies within many of your service areas are stressed after successive years of drought and low SWP allocations. Supplies from the Colorado River are scarcer due to dry conditions throughout the West. The continued uncertainties of climate change, extreme weather, and a third consecutive winter with La Niña conditions impacting the winter storm track lead to the strong possibility that we will see continued reductions to water supplies into 2023.

The most effective way for California to navigate this drought is to increase our water conservation. While we all have far more work to do in this area, several of your members have made significant strides towards meeting the goals in their Water Shortage Contingency Plans. DWR is available to assist with conservation efforts, especially to those agencies under mandatory water restrictions.

I encourage all SWP contracting agencies to continue to promote water conservation measures to your constituents to maintain precious water supplies. These proactive measures are a necessary step for all our agencies to take in the face of continued extreme drought conditions and dwindling local supplies.

Thank you for your continued efforts to conserve water for our future.

Sincerely,

Karla Nemeth
Karla A. Nemeth
Director

(See attached distribution list)