

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 11/4/2014	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Lisa Howe/781-5011	
(4) SUBJECT Thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions for the Board's review of the continuing need for the March 11, 2014 proclamation of local emergency pursuant to Government Code section 8630. All Districts.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board receive the thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions establishing the need to continue the proclamation of local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) N/A	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(9) BUDGETED? Yes
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. ____) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. ____)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: <input type="checkbox"/> 4/5 Vote Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Date: <u>3/11/2014, 4/8/2014, 5/6/2014,</u> <u>6/3/2014, 6/17/2014, 7/15/2014, 8/12/2014,</u> <u>9/9/2014, and 10/7/2014</u>	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW Guy Savage			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts.			

County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Agricultural Commissioner / Lisa Howe
781-5011

DATE: 11/4/2014

SUBJECT: Thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions for the Board's review of the continuing need for the March 11, 2014 proclamation of local emergency pursuant to Government Code section 8630. All Districts.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board receive the thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions establishing the need to continue the proclamation of local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County.

DISCUSSION

Background

On March 11, 2014, the Board adopted a resolution proclaiming a local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County. Section 8630 of the California Government Code and County Code Chapter 2.80.070 (2) require that the Board of Supervisors review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every 30 days until such emergency is terminated. The Board also directed staff to return every 30 days to provide an update on the status of actions by the Drought Task Force, including a report on the analysis regarding local water conditions, local responses, conservation and outreach projects, and the State Water Project.

The last drought update was on October 7, 2014. This is the ninth update since the proclamation of a local emergency on March 11, 2014.

The Drought Task Force continues to meet regularly to coordinate drought monitoring, impact assessments, responses to emergency health and safety, and public communication and outreach. The task force prepared the Monthly Drought Update (Attachment 1) to inform the Board on current drought conditions and related management actions. Current drought conditions confirm the need to continue the proclamation of local emergency.

Current Conditions

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released October 23, 2014 indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). Approximately 95% of California is at a level D-2 Severe Drought or worse with 58% of the state at a D-4 level. Reservoir levels remain significantly lower than the average percentage capacity for this time of year including: Nacimiento 16% (62,185 acre feet); Lopez 44% (21,563 acre feet); Salinas 22% (5,271 acre feet); and Whale Rock 47% (18,425 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 3).

Winter Outlook

California, the central coast in particular, remains the driest region in the western half of the U.S. over the past 3 years. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Winter Outlook, California's record-setting drought will likely persist or intensify in large parts of the state including San Luis Obispo County (Attachment 4). NOAA's Precipitation Outlook favors above-average precipitation across the southern part of the state; however, the central coast region falls into the "equal chance" category. The "equal change" category means that there is not a strong enough climate signal for these areas to make a prediction, so they have an equal chance for above-, near-, or below-normal

temperatures and/or precipitation. In addition, NOAA's Winter Temperature Outlook favors warmer-than-average temperatures for the central coast region (Attachment 5).

Impacts

Agricultural Conditions

Drought impacts continue to evolve affecting different parts of the county in varying degrees. Staff from the Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures and the University of California Cooperative Extension collaborated to review responses to portions of a survey recently sent by the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau to select members. The survey compiled information about irrigation practices and agricultural wastewater prevention strategies used by agricultural producers. Respondents reported a major reduction in the amount of water applied to many crops and producers have made changes to irrigation practices in response to current drought conditions. Survey respondents reported the reduction in the amount of water applied to many crops and changes to irrigation practices have produced both negative and positive impacts. For example, grape growers reported less leaf growth resulting in better quality fruit and better fruit flavor due to water stress. Reduction in energy costs, less stress on wells and overall more direct and efficient water usage was reported. However, olive growers reported low fruit yield and loss of crop. Hay crops were also lost due to drought conditions and cattle herds were reduced due to availability of water. Additional expense to convert from flood irrigation to drip systems was reported. Conversion to a crop that needs less annual rainfall was also mentioned as a response to current drought conditions.

Domestic Wells

The number of dry groundwater wells, small streams, springs, and creeks are increasing as the drought continues. The County continues to receive calls from individuals who are experiencing problems with their domestic wells; however, determining how many wells have gone dry is proving to be challenging. State agencies are reporting this is a problem statewide. The Governor's Drought Task Force created an online intake form for use by local, state, or tribal and federal agencies to document domestic water issues. Individuals with domestic water issues are encouraged to contact County Environmental Health at (805) 781-5544.

It has been noted by a number of counties that people continue to hesitate to give out information related to their wells and other water sources having gone dry. In order to alleviate this concern, the County Drought Task Force created a supplemental anonymous survey. The survey does not ask for any identifying information and is intended to support our request for federal disaster assistance for individuals. Individuals who wish to remain anonymous are encouraged to complete the supplemental survey online at www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought_Update or by phone by calling 805-7811-5011. The County also created a printable version for individuals who prefer to complete the survey by paper (Attachment 6).

Fire Conditions

Due to drought conditions, above normal large fire potential will continue across the state into fall. Forecasts indicate the majority of the County of San Luis Obispo will have an above normal fire potential throughout November. In order to reduce potential ignitions CAL FIRE San Luis Obispo continues to suspend all burning permits and open fires within the State Responsibility Areas and within the Local Responsibility Area under contract with CAL FIRE.

Economic Conditions

Negative economic impacts continue to mount due to drought conditions. Drought-related job losses are continuing to increase across the state. Historically, drought-induced economic losses are felt by municipalities, business and industry, agricultural enterprises, households and individuals, and governments. The San Luis Obispo County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) continues to gather information on local drought-related job impacts. The WIB's Drought Business Impact survey is available at <http://sloworkforce.com/drought-survey/>. Though the WIB is hearing that there are impacts, the County does not have any "reportable" impacts due to the State's requirements for reporting (i.e. specific business name, address, etc.).

The County continues to identify assistance programs to help rural communities, businesses and individuals impacted by California's ongoing drought conditions. Information regarding drought assistance for rural homeowners has been placed on the County Drought Conditions and Water Conservation webpage. Rural Development, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), delivers a number of programs to help rural communities, businesses and individuals impacted by California's ongoing drought conditions.

Conservation Efforts

County Facilities Usage

General Services continues to lead water conservation efforts at county facilities. To date, Facility Services has retrofitted 35 buildings with low-flow fixtures, saving an estimated 3,500 gallons per week. In addition, County Parks completed a project at Nipomo Park to install an irrigation control system resulting in a reduction of water usage.

Emergency Actions

The proclamation continues to provide authority for unforeseen needed actions. As also noted, proclamation provides a statement to State and Federal agencies of the seriousness of the County's situation.

The County has taken no new emergency actions specific to the drought in this reporting period.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board review and receive the attached update. The update highlights the existence of continuing drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County. Review of this update by the Board fulfills the Board's duty to review the need to continue the proclamation of a local emergency due to the existence of drought conditions pursuant to Government Code section 8630. No other Board action is necessary.

Note: Any regulations issued because of the local drought emergency would be subject to Board approval. The local emergency proclamation adopted by the Board on March 11, 2014, will remain in effect until terminated by your Board.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT

At the onset of the Governor's declaration and under the direction of the County Administrative Officer, a County Drought Task Force was formed. The Drought Task Force is comprised of multiple County departments, including: the Administrative Office, Office of Emergency Services, Public Works Department, General Services, County Fire (CAL FIRE), Agricultural Commissioner, Planning and Building, Farm Advisor, Health Agency, and County Counsel. All member departments provided input for this report.

County OES continues to be in regular contact with Cal OES to receive and provide situation status information.

The Public Works Department continues to coordinate with local water purveyors and cities.

Public Health is coordinating with relevant State agencies, including the State California Department of Public Health and Emergency Medical Services Authority Health Coordination Center.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The long-term financial impact on the local economy, including the demand on County and other legal agency services, cannot be forecast at this time. The County continues to track drought-related costs. As of October 22, 2014, tracked labor costs associated with the drought total \$268,342.

RESULTS

Accepting the update prepared by the Drought Task Force, which establishes the existence of conditions of drought, confirms the need to continue the proclamation of a local emergency. Maintaining the proclamation of local emergency will continue to allow for the Public Works Department and other agencies to take immediate actions needed by allowing temporary reduction of certain regulatory and purchasing requirements. This will also permit County staff to assist in drought-related work and tasks outside their normal scope of duties in the capacity of Disaster Service Workers under Government Code section 3100. In addition, acceptance of the update from the Drought Task Force confirms the continuing existence of severe drought conditions and will also serve as notice to the State of our dire conditions and a reminder to all of the serious drought conditions facing the County and State.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1-Monthly Drought Update
2. Attachment 2-U.S. Drought Monitor

3. Attachment 3-Local Reservoir Conditions
4. Attachment 4-U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook
5. Attachment 5-U.S. Winter Precipitation & Temperature Outlook
6. Attachment 6-Drought Impact Information Survey