

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

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| (1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office | (2) MEETING DATE 12/2/2014 | (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? N/A |
| (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, 6/3/2014, 6/17/2014, 7/15/2014, 8/12/2014, 9/9/2014, 10/7/2014, and 11/4/2014</u> | |
| (17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW Guy Savage | | | |
| (18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts | | | |

County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Administrative Office /Lisa Howe/781-5011

DATE: 12/2/2014

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 November 4, 2014. This is the tenth update since the proclamation of a local emergency on March 11, 2014. This month's drought update is on the consent agenda as drought conditions remain relatively unchanged and there were no major actions requiring further discussion that have occurred since the last update.

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 November 20, 2014 indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). Approximately 94% of California is at a level D-2 Severe Drought or worse with 55% of the state at a D-4 intensity level. Rainfall totals for the 2014-15 water year (July 2014 – June 2015) are at 5-10% of average annual rainfall totals. See Attachment 3 for additional information. Reservoir levels remain significantly lower than the average percentage capacity for this time of year including: Nacimiento 16% (60,665 acre feet); Lopez 43% (21,028 acre feet); Salinas 21% (4,992 acre feet); and Whale Rock 46% (17,957 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 4).

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. The severe drought is unlikely to abate much in the long term. This is the third consecutive dry year and most of the state has only seen 33-55% of normal precipitation since the end of 2011. Even with the possibility of an increase in

precipitation, it is likely that reservoir outflows will continue to exceed inflows. According to county data, during the October 31 rainstorm weekend, outflows continued to exceed inflows in both Lopez and Whale Rock reservoirs. It would take several months of well above normal precipitation to erase the precipitation deficit which has accrued during the last 3 years. Since this appears unlikely at this time, drought conditions will likely persist.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center has reduced their El Niño Watch to a 58% chance of a weak strength event over the next few months. The Winter Precipitation Outlook favors a greater than 33% chance of above average rainfall for Southern California, while the U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook calls for the drought to persist or intensify. No significant increase in rivers and reservoirs is expected.

Impacts

Agricultural Conditions

The University of California Cooperative Extension has discontinued sending out monthly drought surveys to key stakeholders for the remainder of this year, since conditions have not substantially changed in the past 60 days. Warm soil temperatures and recent precipitation have resulted in germination of forage plants and weeds throughout the county. Continued rainfall will be critical to produce sufficient forage for cattle and sufficient vegetation to prevent soil erosion.

Looking ahead, state officials are predicting higher food prices if 2015 proves to be another dry year. On November 4, water officials met with the State Board of Food and Agriculture to discuss the potential drought impacts on groundwater, agriculture, food prices, and water systems operations in 2015. Richard Howitt, a resource economist with the University of California, cautioned that the "buffer stock of groundwater that helped growers mitigate the loss of surface water might not be in 2015 and food prices could go up by as much as 10%-15%.

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.

In addition, 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) 781-5011.

To date, the County has received 73 responses to the supplemental survey. Of the 73 respondents, 33% report that one or more wells have gone dry and 10% report they are trucking in water.

Fire Conditions

The recent rains and fall weather has increased the dead fuel moistures and decreased the energy release component to near average levels which has reduced relative fire danger. Due to recent rains and moderating conditions, CAL FIRE will transition on November 24 down to 10 wildland engines with a staffing level of 3.0 employees. With green grass sprouting throughout the area and with cool weather and the increased chances for rain, the burn permit suspension may be lifted as soon as November 24. In addition, forecasts indicate rainfall will likely be sufficient to reduce fire danger from above normal in December.

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 and Parks Usage

General Services continues to lead water conservation efforts at county facilities. To date, Facility Services has retrofitted 38 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. With the rainfall received and cooler temperatures staff has reduced watering on landscape and sports fields to a minimum.

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 Parks, 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 November 20, 2014, tracked labor costs associated with the drought total \$287,429.

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 Map
3. Attachment 3-Rainfall and Reservoir Update
4. Attachment 4-Local Reservoir Conditions Image