

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

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 3/24/2015	(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 type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. ____) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. <u>45 Minutes</u>)			
(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: N/A <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>3/11/14, 4/8/14, 5/6/14, 6/3/14, 6/17/14, 7/15/14, 8/12/14, 9/9/14, 10/7/14, 11/4/14, 12/2/14, 12/16/14, 1/6/15, 2/3/215, 2/24/15</u>	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW This item was prepared by the Administrative Office			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts			

County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Administrative Office / Lisa Howe /781-5011

DATE: 3/24/2015

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.

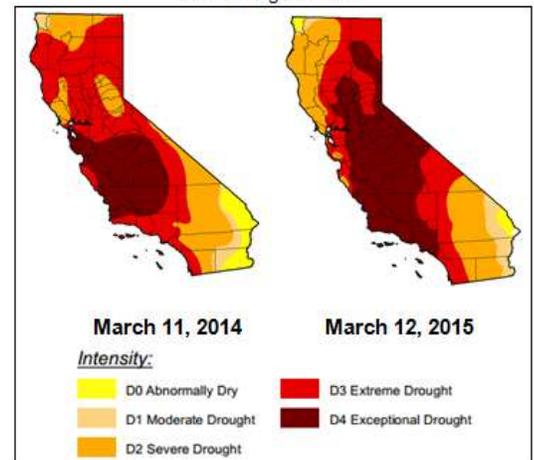
The last drought update was on February 24, 2015. This is the fifteenth update since the proclamation of a local emergency on March 11, 2014. The Drought Task Force continues to meet regularly to coordinate drought monitoring, impact assessments, responses to emergency health and safety, and public communication and outreach. The Drought 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 a local emergency.

Current Conditions

California is entering its fourth year of severe drought. Precipitation throughout the state has been well below what would be typical for late winter. The March manual snowpack survey recorded California snowpack at 13% of normal to date. Much of the state remains in a severe drought or worse. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released March 12, 2015, indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). Approximately 93% of California is at a level D2 – Severe Drought or worse with 40% of the state at a D4 intensity level. Figure 1 shows how the intensity levels throughout the state have changed over the past year.

County rainfall totals for the 2014-15 water year (July 2014 – June 2015) range from 39-64% of average annual rainfall totals. See Attachment 3 for additional information. Reservoir levels remain significantly lower

Figure 1
U.S. Drought Monitor



than the average percentage capacity for this time of year including: Nacimiento 29% (109,238 acre feet); Whale Rock 44% (17,184 acre feet); Lopez 40% (19,645); and Salinas 18% (4,272 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 4).

Outlook

The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center has increased their El Niño Watch to an advisory for a 50-60% chance of a weak strength event through summer. Due to the expected weak strength, widespread or significant impacts are not anticipated. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook is calling for the drought to persist or intensify throughout California (Attachment 5).

While the winter storms provided a meaningful uptick in many of the state's reservoirs the lack of precipitation since those storms means that California remains firmly in a drought. It would take several months of well above normal precipitation to erase the precipitation deficit which has accrued during the last 3 years. The severe drought is unlikely to abate much in the long term.

Impacts

Agricultural Conditions

In 2014, UC Cooperative Extension delivered a monthly survey to a limited number of key leaders in the agricultural community. In order to confirm the 2014 monthly survey results from a broader cross-section of the agricultural community, a voluntary question was included as part of the yearly crop report survey from the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. So far, responses in the crop report survey have generally confirmed responses from key stakeholders, many indicating loss of production and income. Tree and vine growers report plant dieback and death in some commodities, including avocados and walnuts. Avocado growers report stumping trees because of lack of water and hauling water to irrigate trees. Citrus and avocado growers reported increased irrigation requirements because of lack of rainfall, and increased irrigation costs. Production was lower due to reduced crop and smaller fruit. Grain and hay producers reported grazing planted acreage due to poor growth or idling ground due to lack of water. Livestock producers report selling animals, buying feed and hauling water.

Fire Conditions

Due to recent dry weather, the fire hazard will significantly increase through the upcoming fire season. In addition, widespread tree mortality is plainly evident throughout the county increasing fire danger. CAL FIRE continues to monitor the drought situation and prepare for the wildfire season ahead while maintaining staffing that meets the current threat.

Domestic Wells

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. Data collected is considered confidential and access is restricted. 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 87 responses to the supplemental survey. Of the 87 respondents, 28 (34%) report that one or more wells have gone dry, (11) 13% are trucking in water, and 64 (78%) have heard of other wells running dry in their area. It is important to note that the survey is voluntary and as a result, responses are not representative of the county population.

Economic Conditions

Negative economic impacts continue to mount due to drought conditions. 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.

Drought Monitoring and Response

As discussed above, the County Administrative Officer assembled a County Drought Task Force to coordinate drought monitoring, impact assessments, responses to emergency health and safety, and public communication and outreach. The Drought Task Force was to target five key areas as they pertain to the drought: 1) USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation, 2) The County's role as a water purveyor, 3) Countywide facilities water usage reduction plan, 4) Public communication and outreach efforts, and 5) the need to continue the proclamation of a local emergency. Since the proclamation of the local drought emergency, the Task Force has continued to target all five areas. The following section provides an overview of the Drought Task Force efforts specific to these five areas.

1. USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation

When a disaster designation is made by USDA, financial assistance is made available for qualifying agricultural producers. The type of assistance provided, as well as the eligibility for assistance, is dependent on the type of disaster event and the type of agricultural operation requiring relief. The USDA Farm Services Agency administers these programs and provides support to affected agricultural producers. The San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures continues to provide support in the form of outreach and information dissemination to agriculturalists regarding disaster declarations. Additionally, the Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, along with UC Cooperative Extension, may help to assess crop loss in the event that information is required by the Farm Services Agency.

2. The County's Role as a Water Purveyor

The Department of Public Works is responsible for several water resources projects and programs including retail water and wholesale supplies and systems. Throughout the last year, the department has continued to strategize for each of the major sub regions of the County where the Department of Public Works provides either retail or wholesale water supply services. The most recent County Water Systems One Year Look-Ahead Memorandum is attached (Attachment 6.) The document outlines the Department of Public Works' approach to managing County operated water systems for the next twelve months.

3. Countywide Facilities Water Usage Reduction Plan

Over the last year, the County took several actions to reduce water usage in County owned facilities, at County Parks, at Golf Courses, at the Airport, in new construction and lease agreements, and with fleet vehicles. General Services continues to lead water conservation efforts at county facilities. To date, staff has retrofitted 44 buildings with low-flow fixtures, saving an estimated 4,500 gallons per week. In addition, staff replaced multiple leaking water lines saving thousands of gallons of water through leak repair. County Parks and Golf have implemented several projects to achieve water savings in all districts: reduction of turf where practical, installation of efficient irrigation systems, use of drought tolerant and lower water demand vegetation, frequent inspection of irrigation lines and sprinkler heads for proper operation, and adding mulch to plant beds to preserve moisture.

4. Public Communication Efforts

The Public Works Department continues to work with agencies affected by the drought and provide educational presentations to interested parties. Conservation mailers have been sent to retail customers and signs have been installed in the Community Service Areas.

In an effort to raise awareness about water supply issues and communicate the call for a 20% voluntary reduction in water usage, the County continues to utilize multiple channels of communication for water conservation outreach efforts. Such channels include local collaboration, website marketing, and news media.

5. Proclamation of a Local Emergency

The Drought Task Force provides a report to the Board of Supervisors every 30 days to review the need for continuing the local emergency. The monthly updates can be found on the County's Drought Conditions and Water Conservation webpage at www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought_Update.htm.

The County Drought Task Force will continue to target these areas in order to coordinate drought monitoring, impact assessments, and public communication and outreach. In addition, the Task Force will continue emergency response planning efforts as discussed below.

Emergency Response Planning

County Office of Emergency Services

Emergency management related local coordination has included County OES, in its role as general emergency management Operational Area Coordinator, gathering situation status information from agencies and jurisdictions throughout the county to consolidate and provide to Cal OES. This has led to the Governor's Drought Task Force becoming aware of serious situations in our county. This resulted in the Governor's Office of Emergency Services organizing a tour by various state agencies of the serious situation in our north coast, among other areas, and in turn providing assistance during Cambria's emergency water project as it related to coordinating permit issues with various state agencies.

State and Federal key action items related to emergency management were limited to Cal OES coordinating ongoing situation status information from throughout the county. Information provided to Cal OES included status updates on projects related to Heritage Ranch, the Paso Robles water basin, Chorro Valley updates, and Cambria's emergency water supply.

Contingency Planning

The Public Health Department, the Public Works Department, and CAL FIRE/County Fire continue to develop plans to ensure there is adequate supply of water for firefighting and domestic water use in the event that a community does not have enough water. Water availability information from public water systems has been categorized into three categories; Watch, Vulnerable, and Critical. The information has been placed into a GIS mapping layer for contingency planning.

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 March 12, 2015, tracked labor costs associated with the drought total \$317,895.

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

- Attachment 1 – Monthly Drought Update
- Attachment 2 – U.S. Drought Monitor Map
- Attachment 3 – Rainfall and Reservoir Data
- Attachment 4 – Local Reservoir Conditions
- Attachment 5 – U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook
- Attachment 6 - County Water Systems One Year Look-Ahead