

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

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 6/16/2015	(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 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>3/11/14, 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, 2/3/15, 2/24/15, 3/24/15, 4/21/15, and 5/19/15.</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: 6/16/2015

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.

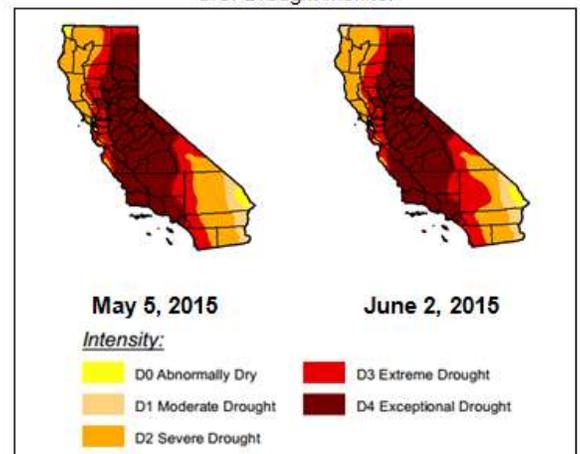
The last drought update was on May 19, 2015. This month's drought update is on the consent agenda as drought conditions remain relatively unchanged and there were no major actions requiring further discussion that have occurred since the last update.

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 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**

Precipitation throughout the state continues to be well below what would be typical for this time of year. Much of the state remains in a severe drought or worse. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released June 4, 2015, indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). Approximately 94% of California is at a level D2 Severe Drought or worse with 47% of the state at a D4 intensity level. Figure 1 shows how the intensity levels throughout the state have changed over the past month.

Figure 1  
U.S. Drought Monitor



County rainfall totals for the 2014-15 water year (July 2014 – June 2015) range from 43-67% 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 27% (101,225 acre feet); Whale Rock 42% (16,225 acre feet); Lopez 37% (18,279); and Salinas 16% (3,770 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 4).

## **Outlook**

Although frequent low-pressure systems kept the area cooler than normal, May was one of the driest on record, with less 0.15" of rain throughout the County. The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center has increased the El Niño Advisory to a 90% chance of weak strength event through summer and an 80% chance through the end of the year. This event is still not expected to influence the weather in any meaningful way. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook is calling for the drought to persist or intensify throughout California and most of the far western United States (Attachment 5).

## **Impacts**

### Agricultural Conditions

Staff from the County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures and the University of California Cooperative Extension collaborated to monitor the effect of drought conditions to agricultural operations. Water quantity and water quality, as well as accumulated salts in the root-zone continue to drive decisions by agricultural producers.

Dr. Royce Larsen, Farm Advisor, University of California Cooperative Extension, has completed the yearly forage production sampling from several rangeland sites located throughout the county. An overall forage loss for the county is approximately 65-70%. This is the fourth year in a row with below average forage production.

To sustain the greatly reduced number of cattle grazing throughout the county, several cattle ranchers have reported the need to haul water to fill water troughs in compensation for the lack of natural springs or dry wells that normally provide water for livestock. It is estimated that over 50% to perhaps as high as 75% of the cattle normally found grazing have been sold and/or moved out of San Luis Obispo County during 2014 and 2015 due to lack of forage and water.

Early season estimates indicate vegetable growers have reduced the number of acres planted by as much as 25% to 35%. This includes a reduction in the number of crop rotations normally planted because of lack of irrigation water. This will result in less harvests, and reduced yields per acre.

Wholesale nursery operators have reported dramatic declines in sales since Governor Brown's April 25, 2015 Executive Order of 25% reductions of potable urban water usage. The public is reluctant to purchase plants that require watering. This has led to a back log of inventory of plants which eventually is lost as plants deteriorate beyond prime conditions.

### Fire Conditions

Fire hazards will continue to increase through the fire season. Longer days and warm and dry weather has steadily increased the fire danger and prompted an early start to the 2015 fire season. 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.

The County Planning and Building Department is working to provide relief from hazard tree permitting requirements in Cambria to facilitate tree removal on the high number of affected parcels. In addition, forest assessments have been initiated to quantify the extent of this issue and the results will be made known as soon as they become available.

The SLO Fire Safe Council (FSC) was recently awarded a grant by PG&E to assist with hazard tree abatement work in the County. The initial focus of this work will be in Cambria to mitigate hazard trees on Bridge Street and within the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. This will further the work being completed by PG&E and by County Roads, which removed over 160 hazard trees in May.

Currently, \$42 million is available for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) grants. An additional \$90 million has been identified for GRRF grants in the Governor's budget for next fiscal year. On behalf of the community, the FSC is applying for funding through this program for substantial hazard abatement and forest health projects in Cambria.

### 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](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought_Update) or by phone by calling (805) 781-5011.

To date, the County has received 91 responses to the supplemental survey. Of the 91 respondents, 29 (35%) report that one or more wells have gone dry, 12 (14%) are trucking in water, and 66 (79%) 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.

#### **Emergency Response Planning**

##### County Office of Emergency Services

San Luis Obispo County OES continues to coordinate with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to provide updates on the drought situation, respond to specific information requests to Cal OES, and coordinate local emergency needs. In addition, County OES continues to gather local situation status information and drought costs throughout the county in order to send the information to Cal OES.

Additionally, information specific to the Cambria fire threat has been provided to Cal OES and has been shared with the State Drought Task Force. The status of the Cambria fire threat has and will continue to be well a high priority issue shared with state agencies.

##### Water Sale Agreement with Diablo Canyon

A Water Sale Agreement has been worked out with PG&E to use non-potable water as available from Diablo Canyon's desalination plant for emergency use within the county. The Board of Supervisors approved the agreement on May 19, 2015. In addition, the Board directed staff to work with PG&E on a logistics report to identify what is needed to pipe surplus water from the PG&E desalination plant to the community and return to the Board within 120 days with the findings. Furthermore, the Board appointed Supervisors Hill and Compton to serve as a subcommittee to coordinate with the Drought Task Force and PG&E.

##### 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 June 3, 2015, tracked labor costs associated with the drought total \$340,925.

## **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 Data
4. Attachment 4 – Local Reservoir Conditions
5. Attachment 5 – U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook