

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

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 8/11/2015	(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? 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: _____	
(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: 8/11/2015

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.

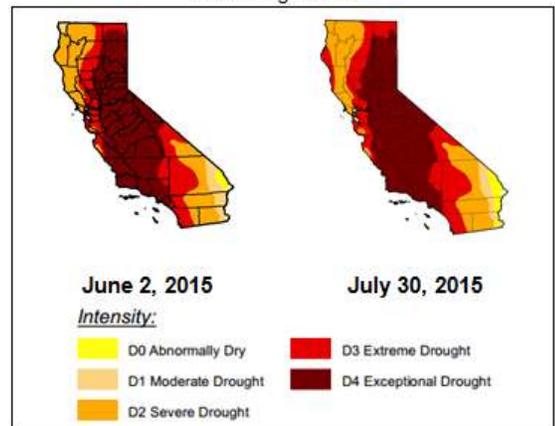
The last drought update was on July 14, 2015. This month's drought update is on the consent agenda as drought conditions remain relatively unchanged and there were no major actions requiring further discussion that have occurred since the last update.

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

Much of the state remains in a severe drought or worse. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released July 30, 2015, indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). Approximately 95% of California is at a level D2 Severe Drought or worse with 46% 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



See Attachment 3 for county rainfall totals for the 2015-16 water year (July 2015 – June 2016). Reservoir levels remain significantly lower than the average percentage capacity for this time of year including: Nacimiento 24% (90,313 acre feet); Whale Rock 40% (15,655 acre feet); Lopez 35% (17,259 acre feet); and Salinas 14% (3,448 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 4).

Outlook

The remnants of Hurricane Delores produced record rainfall in many areas in Southern California including 1 - 2 inches of rain in San Luis Obispo County during the weekend of July 18-19. Since August through October is a dry time of year, long-term hydrological drought is likely to continue. There is a greater than 90 percent chance El Niño will continue through Northern Hemisphere winter 2015-16, and around an 80 percent chance it will last into early spring 2016, according to an advisory released by the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center. However, long-term hydrological drought is likely to continue. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook is calling for the drought to persist or intensify throughout California and most of the far western U.S.

Impacts

Agricultural Conditions

The recent rains of July 18-19 were a welcomed sight for many agriculturalists. However, amounts were variable and inconsistent throughout the county. Generally, growers that received substantial rain appreciated the break in irrigation schedules. Water quantity and quality, as well as accumulated salts in the root-zone, continue to drive decisions by agricultural producers. Limited winter rainfall has resulted in higher root-zone salinity levels than are tolerated by some crops. The July rain was not enough to leach roots adequately. As irrigation water salinity rises, it becomes more difficult to leach problem salts from the rootzone. Impacts to both produce quality and quantity remain to be seen.

Fire Conditions

Fire hazards will continue to increase through the fire season. Widespread tree mortality is plainly evident throughout the County, increasing fire danger. Longer days and warm and dry weather has steadily increased the fire danger and prompted an early start to the 2015 fire season. In San Luis Obispo County in 2015, through June, CAL FIRE responded to **85** wildfires, which burned **1,841** acres. Since 2007, the average for this period is 83 wildfires burning 441 acres. On June 19, 2015, CAL FIRE proclaimed a Countywide Burn Ban. The burn ban eliminates all burning within CAL FIRE jurisdiction except for campfires at approved campgrounds. CAL FIRE continues to monitor the drought situation and prepare for the wildfire season while maintaining staffing that meets the current threat.

The County Planning and Building Department continues to work 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. To date, approximately 50 plots have been completed.

Dry Well Reports

As the County enters the fourth consecutive summer of drought, the Drought Task Force continues to monitor and identify communities and local water systems in danger of running out of water.

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.

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 Food Aid

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided boxes of food to the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo for households impacted by the drought. Call the Food Bank for more information and to ensure Drought Food Assistance is still available: (805) 238-4664 or www.slofoodbank.org.

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 a high priority issue shared with state agencies.

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. These maps are available on all the County Fire Departments mobile data computers. During a fire, the fire commanders can use these maps to identify which water sources are reliable and draw down systems that are vulnerable.

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, County Counsel, and First District Supervisor Frank Mecham. 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 July 1, 2015, tracked labor costs associated with the drought total \$351,330.

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