

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

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 9/1/2015	(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)	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(9) BUDGETED? Yes
(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>20 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) This item was prepared by the Administrative Office.		(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? N/A	(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, 5/19/15, 6/16/15, 7/14/15, and 8/11/15</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: 9/1/2015

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.

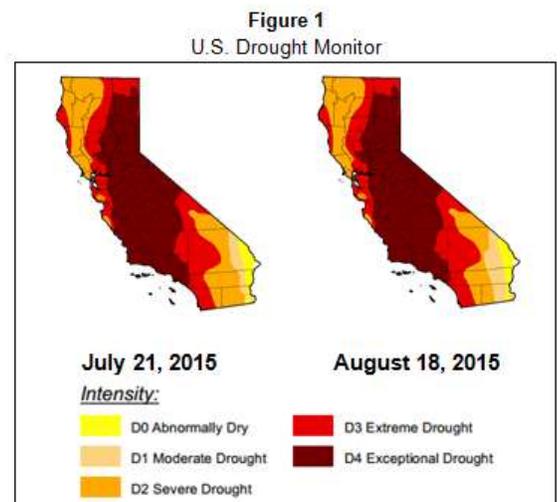
The last drought update was on August 11, 2015. Previous thirty-day updates are available at the following link: http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought_Update/County_Drought_Updates.htm

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.

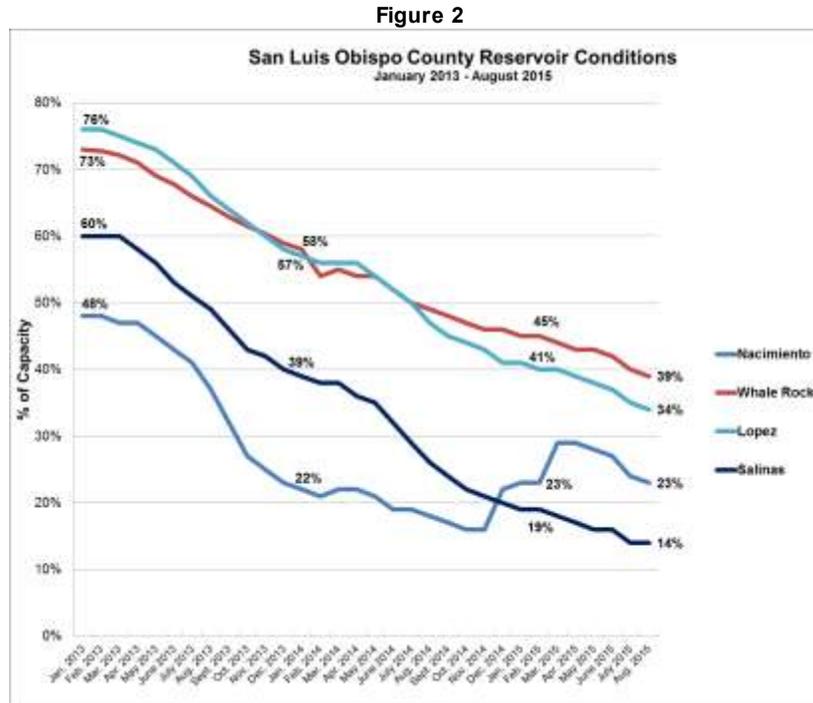
Current Conditions

Much of the state remains in a severe drought or worse. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released August 20, 2015, indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). Approximately 92% 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.

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 23% (85,658 acre feet); Whale Rock 39% (15,357 acre feet); Lopez 34% (16,834 acre feet); and Salinas 14% (3,308 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 4). Figure 2 shows how the percentage capacity of each reservoir has changed since January 2013.



Outlook

Since August through October is a dry time of year, long-term hydrological drought is likely to continue. An El Niño (ENSO) Advisory continues in effect, with the August 13, 2015 ENSO Diagnostic Discussion indicating a 90 percent chance of El Niño conditions continuing through Northern Hemisphere winter 2015-16, and 85 percent chance it will last into early spring 2016. This El Niño is one of the strongest on record for this time of the year (mid-August). However, making seasonal climate forecasts of precipitation is scientifically difficult. Attachment 6 provides a short overview with more detail and information on the unpredictable nature of the El Niño phenomenon. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook is calling for the drought to persist or intensify throughout California.

Impacts

Agricultural Conditions

Water availability and quality continue to drive decisions by agricultural producers. The rains of July 19-20 and warm soil temperatures resulted in germination of grasses and forbs much earlier than would occur in an average year. This was particularly apparent in Paso Robles. These plants will not have sufficient soil moisture to survive, so represent a loss to the seed bank stored in the soil. Although we do not know what the final impact will be, it is likely that there are sufficient seed stored for good germination if fall precipitation is measurable and ongoing.

Fire Conditions

Fire hazards will continue to increase through the fire season. Since the beginning of the year, firefighters from CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service have responded to 5,650 wildfires across the state, burning 260,000 acres. The drought has led to historically dry conditions increasing fire danger, as evident from the Cuesta Fire. As of August 23, the Cuesta Fire remained at 3,500 acres burned and 75 percent containment. In addition, widespread tree mortality is increasing fire danger. 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.

As previously reported, CAL FIRE San Luis Obispo has suspend all burning permits and open fires within the State Responsibility Area and within the Local Responsibility Area under contract with CAL FIRE. The Countywide Burn Ban will remain in effect until there is enough precipitation to reduce the fire threat. The burn ban eliminates all burning within CAL FIRE jurisdiction except for campfires at approved campgrounds.

CAL FIRE is urging residents to do their part to be fire safe during this critical time and to make sure they have prepared an emergency plan in case a fire threatens their home or family. Here are some tips all citizens can use to prevent wildfires:

- Do "defensible space" clearing such as mowing before 10 a.m. and never on a hot and windy day.
- Don't toss cigarettes out your car window.
- Don't pull your vehicle off into dry grass or brush. Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires that can't be seen easily by the driver.
- Check with local officials for additional fire restrictions.
- In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline powered equipment. This includes tractors, chainsaws, weed-eaters, mowers, motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).
- Report any suspicious activity. Call the CAL FIRE Arson Hotline: 1-800-468-4408.

Nearly ninety-five percent of all wildland fires within CAL FIRE's jurisdiction are human-caused and CAL FIRE is asking the public to do their part in preventing wildfires. For more fire safety tips visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org or the CAL FIRE website at www.fire.ca.gov.

Dry Well Reports

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

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.

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.

State Updates

On August 12, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced two new rebate programs to encourage Californians to reduce water usage. The rebate programs provide a \$100 consumer rebate to replace one old toilet per household and up to \$2 per square foot for lawn replacement. Californians can visit SaveOurWaterRebates.com to apply for the rebates.

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 and Recreation, 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 August 20, 2015, tracked labor costs associated with the drought total \$358,564.

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
6. Attachment 6 – Will El Nino Make a Difference?