

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

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 4/5/2016	(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 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, 5/19/15, 6/16/15, 7/14/15, 8/11/15, 9/1/15, 9/22/15, 10/20/15, 11/17/15, 12/15/15, 1/12/16, 2/9/16, 3/8/16</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: 4/5/2016

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.

## **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.

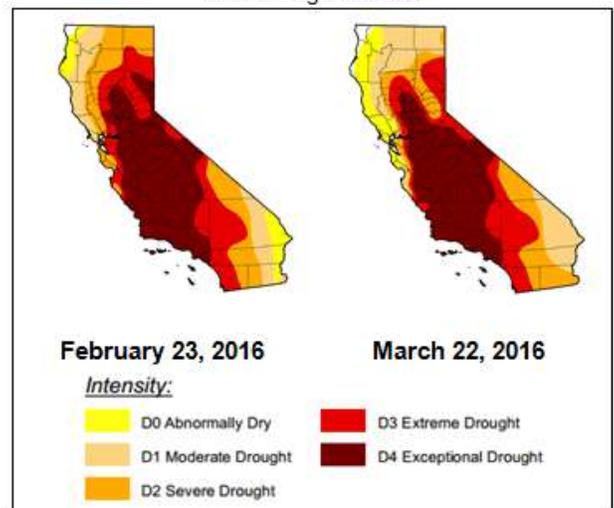
The last drought update was on March 8, 2016. Previous thirty-day updates are available at the following link: [http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought\\_Update/County\\_Drought\\_Updates.htm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought_Update/County_Drought_Updates.htm)

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. Provided below is a summary of the current conditions and conservation and response efforts.

## **Current Conditions**

Much of the state remains in a severe drought or worse. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released March 24, 2016, indicates the majority of San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). The north western portion of the County has moved down to the D3 – Extreme Drought intensity rating. Approximately 73% of California is at a level D2 Severe Drought or worse with 35% of the state at a D4 intensity level. Figure 1 shows how the intensity levels throughout the state have changed in the past month.

Figure 1  
U.S. Drought Monitor



Reservoir levels remain significantly lower than the average percentage capacity including: Nacimiento 34% (129,008 acre feet); Whale Rock 36% (14,094 acre feet); Lopez 30% (14,645 acre feet); and Salinas 14% (3,287 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 4).

## **Outlook**

Throughout most areas of the county, February delivered under an inch of rain and March has produced between 2-4 inches of rain. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is still posting an El Niño Advisory for a strong event to continue with gradual weakening into early summer 2016. Most forecast models continue to indicate an increase in precipitation and lower temperatures in California this winter. The Seasonal Drought Outlook is calling for the drought to persist and it appears likely that the Central Coast will remain in "exceptional" drought at least until next winter.

## **Impacts**

### Agricultural Conditions

Generally, agricultural conditions remain unchanged from last month. However, the warmer than average temperatures and the lack of normal rainfall throughout February caused bolting and seeding of many rangelands forage plant species. Even though there has been above average rainfall for March, this current growing cycle may result in below long term average production, though it appears at this time it will be better than previous years. The warm weather caused many area vineyards to come out of the dormancy period earlier than average, increasing the threat of frost damage. Vegetable and berry growers have appreciated the recent March rains. However, the wet field conditions make it challenging to schedule harvest activities, which are fully underway for strawberry growers. Berry growers remain concerned about plant disease transmission due to wet conditions, causing spoilage.

### Fire Conditions

Although large fire potential has been reduced significantly by precipitation in most areas, areas are still vulnerable to wildfires. The monthly/seasonal outlook from Predictive Services calls for normal large fire potential through June 2016.

CAL FIRE is currently at winter preparedness staffing levels with two additional wildland engines implementing a number of fire prevention projects throughout the County. For the 2016 fire season, 20 new firefighters have been hired and 38 additional firefighters will be hired on April 4. Once training is completed, they are deployed to their assigned fire stations. April 11 is the target date for increasing staffing to 10 wildland engines.

### Hazardous Trees (Tree Mortality)

Widespread tree mortality is plainly evident throughout the county. All tree species have been adversely affected by the drought. The area most severely impacted is the Cambria Monterey Pine Forest. The eucalyptus stands on the Nipomo mesa are also showing a sharp increase in the number of dead trees and in the number of live trees with dead crowns. The epidemic levels of tree die-off create a serious fire and safety hazard and, even if the county receives normal or above rainfall this winter, dead trees will continue to pose major threats to public safety. A number of local agencies have been working together to address the threat. The County is coordinating with the state to help address the issue of tree mortality and secure the necessary resources to help this growing problem.

### Economic Conditions

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.

The Governor's Drought Task Force created an online intake form for local, state, or tribal and federal agencies to document domestic water issues. The information is intended to inform and coordinate state response and mitigate drought impacts. Both agencies and individuals can complete the reporting form. Individuals with domestic water issues are encouraged to contact County Environmental Health at (805) 781-5544 or visit the state online reporting website at <https://mydrywatersupply.water.ca.gov/report/>.

## **County Facilities Usage and Conservation Actions**

### Water Conservation

Water usage data for all facilities with water billing from a vendor has been entered into the Utility Manager system. Water usage status updates for the users in the Utility Manager system and the County Operations Center show a 13% reduction countywide in water usage in January 2015 from January 2013.

## **Emergency Response Planning and Emergency Actions**

### 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. County OES continues to participate in the statewide drought conference calls hosted by Cal OES.

### Contingency Planning

County Public Health, 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, 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 March 25, 2016, tracked labor costs associated with the drought total \$382,995.

## **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