

For Immediate Release

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California K-12 Schools & Community Colleges Urged to Cut Water Use

Sacramento—In response to Governor Brown’s recent [drought state of emergency declaration](#), California public school administrators have been asked to take immediate measures to reduce water use at campuses throughout the state.

“California is experiencing the worst drought in our state’s history and Governor Brown is asking every Californian to take extra steps to use water wisely,” said state architect Chester A. Widom, FAIA in a letter to district officials. “I am asking school districts to lead by example in water conservation and water efficiency efforts, wherever possible.”

School officials, who collectively manage approximately 11,000 facilities in 1,200 school districts throughout the state, were supplied with a water conservation best practices guide developed by the California Department of General Services and the Department of Water Resources.

The Division of the State Architect (DSA), which oversees design and construction oversight for K–12 schools, and community colleges, provided school districts with additional resources including a water conservation report card developed by the Collaborative for High Performance Schools. DSA is also developing guidance for schools on the use of recycled water in concrete used in construction projects.

With California facing one of the most severe droughts on record, Governor Brown declared a [drought State of Emergency](#) last month and directed state officials to take all necessary actions to prepare for water shortages, and the Governor, joined by legislative leaders, [announced legislation](#) to immediately help communities deal with the devastating dry conditions affecting our state and to provide funding to increase local water supplies.

Governor Brown met with [President Obama](#) about crucial federal support during the ongoing drought last week, and the state [continues](#) to work with [federal partners](#) to ensure a [coordinated](#) drought response. Governor Brown and the administration have also [expressed support](#) for [federal legislation](#) introduced by Senators Feinstein and Boxer and Representatives Jim Costa, Tony Cárdenas and Sam Farr.

Across state government, action is being taken. The Department of General Services is leading water [conservation efforts](#) at state facilities, and the Department of Transportation is cutting water usage along California's roadways by 50 percent. Caltrans has also launched a public awareness campaign, putting a water [conservation message](#) on their more than 700 electronic highway signs.

In January, the state took [action to conserve](#) water in numerous Northern California [reservoirs](#) to meet minimum needs for operations impacting the environment and the economy, and recently the Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced they would seek the authority to make [water exchanges](#) to deliver water to those who need it most. The State Water Resources Control Board announced it would work with hydropower generators and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to [preserve water](#) in California reservoirs. Recently the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Fish and Game Commission [restricted fishing](#) on [some waterways](#) due to low water flows worsened by the drought.

The state is working to protect local communities from the dangers of extreme drought. The California Department of Public Health [identified](#) and offered [assistance](#) to communities at risk of severe drinking water shortages and is working with other state and local agencies to develop solutions for vulnerable communities. CAL FIRE hired [additional firefighters](#) and is continuously [adjusting staffing](#) throughout the state to help address the [increased fire threat](#) due to drought conditions. The California Department of Food and Agriculture launched a [drought website](#) to help farmers, ranchers and farmworkers find resources and assistance programs that may be available to them during the drought.

Even as the state deals with the immediate impacts of the drought, it's also planning for the future. Recently, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency and CDFG released the [California Water Action Plan](#), which will guide state efforts to enhance water supply reliability, restore damaged and destroyed ecosystems and improve the resilience of our infrastructure.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 20 percent, and the [Save Our Water](#) campaign launched four [public service announcements](#) encouraging residents to conserve and has resources available in [Spanish](#).

Last December, the Governor formed a [Drought Task Force](#) to review expected water allocations and California's preparedness for water scarcity. In May 2013, Governor Brown issued an [Executive Order](#) to direct state water officials to expedite the review and processing of voluntary transfers of water.

The Department of General Services acts as the business manager for the State of California. DGS helps state government better serve the public by providing services to state agencies including procurement and acquisition solutions, real estate management, leasing and design services, environmentally friendly transportation, and architectural oversight and funding for the construction of safe schools.

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