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NEWS & MULTIMEDIA

# Reclamation Announces Initial Water Supply Allocation for Central Valley Project

Media Contact: Erin Curtis, 916-978-5100

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**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** – The Bureau of Reclamation today announced the initial 2015 water supply allocation for Central Valley Project agricultural contractors and municipal and industrial contractors. This initial allocation is based on a conservative estimate of the amount of water that will be available for delivery to CVP water users. The allocation, which will be re-examined on a monthly basis as the water year progresses, reflects current reservoir storages, precipitation and snowpack conditions in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada. The California Department of Water Resources reports snowpack is below average for this date with the snow water content statewide currently at 20 percent or less of average for this time of year. California is experiencing its fourth consecutive year of below-

average precipitation, and the Governor's Emergency Drought Proclamation, issued January 17, 2014, remains in effect. Without unusually heavy precipitation over the next few months, extreme drought conditions are forecasted to persist throughout the Central Valley.

Unfortunately, many agricultural water contractors may face a second year of receiving no water from the project – an unprecedented situation. In addition, reduced amounts of water are expected to be available from the CVP for urban uses, although Reclamation anticipates having adequate supplies to provide for unmet health and safety needs for these water users.

Reclamation's initial CVP allocations are primarily based on CVP reservoir storage levels and DWR's February 2015 Runoff Forecast, which indicates another critically dry water year for both the Sacramento Valley and the San Joaquin Valley. Reclamation began Water Year 2015 in October 2014, with only 3.1 million acre-feet of carryover storage in six key CVP reservoirs. This was 26 percent of capacity and 47 percent of the 15-year average for October 1. Since that time, the State has seen several significant rain events but also extended periods of very dry weather. January 2015 was the driest January in recorded history for northern California. With low storage and extremely low snowpack, Reclamation's water managers will work with the State of California and all contractors to effectively carry out project operations and improve water supply consistent with all applicable laws.

Based on low forecasted inflows to Shasta Lake, the State's largest reservoir, Reclamation is also projecting this year to be a second consecutive "Shasta Critical Year" for the purposes of determining maximum contract quantities for many senior water rights holders and wildlife refuges in the Central Valley. If current dry conditions persist, CVP water contractors, whose water supply is based upon senior water rights and the Shasta Critical criteria, will see their contract supply reduced. Although project supplies are limited, Reclamation is committed to working with these contractors to meet their demands through the summer.

"We are bracing for a potential fourth year of severe drought, and this low initial allocation is yet another indicator of the dire situation," said Reclamation Mid-Pacific Regional Director David Murillo. "Reclamation and the Department of the Interior will continue to work with the State of California and our water users to do everything possible to increase water deliveries from the project as we move yet another difficult year. Our economy and our environment depend on it."

Reclamation determines the allocation of CVP water for agricultural, environmental and municipal and industrial purposes based upon many factors. Today's initial allocation, based on a conservative runoff forecast, is driven by critically dry hydrologic conditions, low storage levels, water quality requirements, flow objectives, relative priority of water rights and endangered species protection measures.

Reclamation and DWR are operating consistent with the 2015 Drought Contingency Plan submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board that outlines numerous actions to help the CVP and State Water Project manage limited water supplies during these drought conditions. This includes expanding operational flexibility to conserve stored water and take full advantage of excess and abandoned flows in the Delta.

"The rain events in December were encouraging, but the persistent dry weather the first two months of this year underscores our need to plan for another critical year of drought. We have been working closely for months with our State and federal agency partners to try to minimize impacts and will continue to do so," Murillo said.

This initial set of CVP allocations is based on a conservative assumption that dry conditions will continue for the remainder of the water year. With almost two months remaining in California's rainy season, there is still an opportunity for improved conditions. If conditions improve and hydrology is closer to or above average for the next several months, CVP supplies could improve, with increased supplies to M&I contractors and potentially some water available for allocation to agriculture water users.

### **North-of-Delta Contractors**

- Agricultural water service contractors North-of-Delta are allocated **0 percent** of their contract quantity.
- M&I water service contractors North-of-Delta will receive enough water to meet their health and safety needs or at least 25 percent of their historic use, whichever is greater.

### **South-of-Delta Contractors**

- Agricultural water service contractors South-of-Delta are allocated **0 percent** of their contract quantity.
- M&I water service contractors South-of-Delta will receive enough water to meet their health and safety needs or at least 25 percent of their historic use, whichever is greater.

### **Friant Division Contractors**

- Based on DWR's February 2015 Runoff Forecast for the upper San Joaquin River, contractual requirements to prior right holders, and the overall forecasted operation of the CVP, the Friant Division water supply allocation is **0 percent** of Class 1 and Class 2.
- Reclamation will be working with the Friant contractors to determine what amount of water will be made available to meet health and safety needs within the Friant service area.

### **Eastside Water Service Contractors**

- Eastside water service contractors (Central San Joaquin Water Conservation District and Stockton East Water District) will receive **0 percent** of their contract quantity due to a lack of available CVP supplies out of New Melones.

As the water year progresses, changes to hydrology and opportunities to exercise operational flexibility of the CVP are factors and conditions that will influence future allocations. Water supply updates will be made as appropriate and posted on Reclamation's website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/pa/water>.

For additional information, please contact the Public Affairs Office at 916-978-5100 (TTY 800-877-8339) or email [mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov](mailto:mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov).

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Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Visit our website at [www.usbr.gov](http://www.usbr.gov) and follow us on Twitter [@USBR](https://twitter.com/USBR).

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