



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 11/8/2022

To: Board of Supervisors, Sonoma Water Board of Directors

Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Emergency Management; Sonoma Water

Staff Name and Phone Number: Jeffrey DuVall / 565-1152; Grant Davis / 547-1911

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): All Districts

Title:

Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Continuation

Recommended Action:

Continue Local Emergency Proclamation Due to Drought Conditions

Executive Summary:

On April 27, 2021, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed a local emergency due to drought conditions in the Sonoma County Operational Area. Critically low rainfall over the last two years has resulted in historically low water storage levels in the region's two water supply reservoirs and storage levels continue to decline.

The adverse environmental, economic, health, welfare, and social impacts of the drought continue to pose an imminent threat of disaster, and threaten to cause widespread potential harm to people, businesses, agriculture, property, communities, the environment, wildlife, and recreation in Sonoma County. Therefore, this item requests the Board of Supervisors approve a 60-day continuation of the April 27, 2021, proclamation of local emergency.

As required by Government Code section 8630, the Board must review the proclamation of local emergency every 60 days and determine if there is a need for continuing the local emergency. Due to the ongoing adverse impacts of the drought, staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve the continuation of the April 27, 2021, Proclamation of a Local Emergency Due to Drought Conditions in the Sonoma County Operational Area for an additional 60 days. Information relating to the Drought emergency can be found here:

[<https://socoemergency.org/emergency/drought/>](https://socoemergency.org/emergency/drought/).

Discussion:

Water Supply Update

As of October 19, 2022:

1. Lake Mendocino

The water supply storage level at Lake Mendocino was 39,073 acre-feet, approximately 65.8 percent of the available water supply pool for this time of year. At this time last year, the water supply storage level at Lake Mendocino was 21.8 percent of the available water supply pool.

2. Lake Sonoma

The water supply storage level at Lake Sonoma was 106,696 acre-feet, approximately 43.5 percent of

the available water supply pool. At this time last year, the water supply storage level at Lake Sonoma was approximately 43.2 percent of the available water supply pool.

The U.S. Drought Monitor provides the location and intensity of drought conditions across the country. Currently, almost the entirety of Sonoma County and the surrounding North Coast Region is classified into the D2 category (Severe Drought).

Russian River Watershed Emergency Regulations

On May 31, 2022, the Office of Administrative Law at the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) approved revised emergency regulations for the Russian River Watershed due to severe drought conditions and very low storage at Lake Mendocino. The emergency regulations expire on June 1, 2023. Through the emergency regulations, the State Board has the authority to curtail pre and post-1914 appropriative water right holders and riparian claims based on water availability analyses being prepared by State Board staff. The orders allow recipients to file for an exemption to divert for human health and safety needs. More information on the State Water Board's actions related to the Russian River is available at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drought/russian_river/. □

Based on water demand and water availability forecasts, the State Board issued orders regarding curtailment status to all right holders in the Russian River watershed on June 14, 2022. It orders appropriative right holders and those with riparian claims to monitor an online curtailment status list that will be the mechanism for notifying individuals that their right or claim has been curtailed. On September 29, 2022, the Division posted an updated Curtailment Status List that takes effect on October 1, 2022. Based on current conditions and available forecasts, there are water right curtailments in place and certain right holders must cease or reduce their diversions. Division staff will post a revised Curtailment Status List for the month should supply conditions change. All right holders must continue to monitor the Curtailment Status List for the latest curtailment statuses

Current Water Supply Conditions & Temporary Urgency Change Petition (TUCP)

On May 25, 2022, Sonoma Water filed temporary urgency change petitions (Petitions) with the State Board requesting the water supply condition for the Russian River be changed from Normal Dry Spring to Critical. This would reduce the minimum instream flow requirement on the Upper Russian River from 75 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 25 cfs and on the Lower Russian River from 125 cfs to 35 cfs. The request was based on very low storage levels in both Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. On June 17, 2022, the State Water Board issued an order approving Sonoma Water's request to change the water supply condition to Critical. The new order expires on December 13, 2022. In response, Sonoma Water began reducing releases from both Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma to meet the new minimum instream flow requirements. Similar to last year, Sonoma Water is required to reduce its Russian River diversions by 20 percent from July 1 to October 31 compared to the same period in 2020, or until flows at Hacienda Bridge are at or above 125 cfs. In addition, on July 27, 2022, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued an order approving a flow variance request filed by Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) for the Potter Valley Project, which has significantly reduced imports of Eel River water into the East Fork Russian River.

Ongoing Drought Resiliency Projects

Santa Rosa Plain Wells Drought Resiliency Project

On May 11, 2021, Sonoma Water and County staff presented an overview of the status of the drought in Sonoma County, and specific actions currently underway or planned by Sonoma Water and other County departments/agencies in response to the drought emergency. The Board directed Sonoma Water and County staff to return to the Board to seek authorization and funding to expedite the design and environmental review for activating one of Sonoma Water's Santa Rosa Plain wells to assist in addressing drought impacts. On May 18, 2021, the Board approved a concurrent budget resolution providing \$400,000 of County contingency funds to support this effort. The project is intended to bolster water supply reliability for Sonoma Water's water contractors, and address water shortages impacting the agriculture sector. In general, the Santa Rosa Plain Drought Resiliency Project (Project) consists of two phases:

1. Phase 1 utilizes the county contingency funds and completes the necessary engineering, environmental review, and other activities needed to activate one of Sonoma Water's Santa Rosa Plain wells.
2. Phase 2 involves developing the planning and pre-design activities necessary to seek state drought emergency funding to activate the remaining two Santa Rosa Plain wells, in addition to adding recharge capabilities via groundwater banking.

These collective activities are intended to result in increased drought resiliency by helping drought-impacted communities and assisting in longer-term groundwater management activities under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Sonoma Water staff have formed an internal team to coordinate its activities and facilitate collaboration with partners in implementing the proposed Project. Sonoma Water activated the Phase 1 well (Todd Road Well) in October 2021. Activation of the well makes available an additional 200,000 to 500,000 gallons a day (approximately) for residents and ranchers who have lost domestic water supply and need water for health and safety in areas experiencing severe water shortages. The Phase 1 well could also produce an additional 1 million gallons daily (approximately) for Sonoma Water's water contractors to help alleviate drought impacts on their customers.

Phase 2 efforts were initiated in September 2021. The planning and preliminary design for the Phase 2 wells (Sebastopol Road Well and Occidental Road Well) were completed and an application was submitted to the California Department of Water Resources on November 18, 2021, for implementation funding. On December 23, 2021, DWR released the program's Phase 1 awards. Sonoma Water was awarded \$6,900,000 for the Santa Rosa Plain Water Supply Resiliency Project. Testing and investigation of the existing wells at the Sebastopol Road site has been completed and is currently informing the rehabilitation design, which is substantially complete. A construction contract has been executed to commence the installation of piping needed at the Sebastopol Road Well in order to meet current regulatory requirements for disinfection as part of reactivating the well. Testing and investigation of the existing well at the Occidental Road site is currently being planned for commencement this fall. The implementation schedule for completing the improvements needed for Phase 2 remains subject to the continuation of emergency drought conditions, and the potential impact of supply chain delays for equipment and material deliveries is still being assessed. Notwithstanding those uncertainties, Sonoma Water anticipates commencement of construction and substantial progress toward re-activation of at least one of the additional Phase 2 wells (Sebastopol Road Well) in the fall of 2022. Completion dates will be re-assessed upon contractor's receipt of critical equipment deliveries.

Environmental Resources Drought Activities

Sonoma Water staff continue to meet biweekly with staff from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Regional Board) to discuss Russian River fish distribution, fish habitat, and water quality conditions. Sonoma Water biologists have installed the Mirabel fish ladder video monitoring system to monitor adult salmonid upstream passage. Staff biologists are also monitoring critical riffle sites in the lower Russian River to assess adult salmonid passage opportunities. Sonoma Water biologists are monitoring water quality conditions in Lake Mendocino, the mainstem Russian River and the estuary utilizing permanent and seasonal data sondes that record water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, and salinity (at some sites). Grab samples are also being collected to monitor nutrients and pathogens in the mainstem and estuary. Staff are monitoring algae and cyanobacteria conditions in the mainstem Russian River and sharing observations of conditions with North Coast Regional Board staff. Water quality conditions will continue to be discussed during the meetings with the State Water Board, NMFS, CDFW, and the North Coast Regional Board.

Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project

On July 12, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (also acting as the Board of Directors of Sonoma Water) approved the Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project (Project) recommended by the Department of Emergency Management and Sonoma Water. The Project is developing planning and response capabilities urgently needed to respond to current catastrophic drought conditions and State drought response requirements, while also planning for future flooding events and developing a more defined flood coordination framework. In support of the Project, the Board approved two limited-term positions, one each in DEM and Sonoma Water, and other associated services, supplies, and operational costs. DEM and Sonoma Water expect to return to the Board in November 2022 for approval of the positions. These positions will play a significant role in developing and implementing the Project

Current Public Outreach for Water Conservation and Drought Resources

The Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership's (Partnership) *Drought is Still Here* campaign continues to emphasize the critical importance of saving water. The Partnership campaign being implemented this fall and winter includes topical advertising for implementing drip irrigation systems, how to care for trees during drought, greywater systems, rainwater harvesting, information on water smart plants, and timely reminders to turn off irrigation systems for winter. This advertising utilizes streaming content online, print and digital ads, videos, social media placements, and radio. A weekly graphic showing current reservoir storage levels is ongoing in The Santa Rosa Press Democrat print and online news publications and on Sonoma Water's and the Partnership's websites.

A drought outreach subcommittee of the Partnership continues to meet monthly to coordinate development of new advertising and to finalize outreach plans through the fall and winter period. The Partnership recently completed a series of Saving Water Summer Pop-Up events, culminating at the Fiesta de Independencia held at the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts on September 18, 2022. In total, the Partnership hosted 27 pop-ups over the summer to share drought information and water saving tools with participants. Six pop-ups occurred simultaneously on August 20, 2022, in collaboration with home improvement stores throughout Sonoma and Marin counties, where total customer engagement numbered in the thousands. Overall, the ongoing drought

outreach campaign continues to be effective in meeting the Governor's call for a 15% reduction as compared to 2020 use. For the July 2021 through August 2022 period, the Partnership is maintaining a 21% reduction in total water production as compared to the same period in 2020. Current drought information, with links to tools, tips, and local programs to help customers save water can be found at www.savingwaterpartnership.org <<http://www.savingwaterpartnership.org>>.

Interagency Drought Task Force

DEM staff, in collaboration with Sonoma Water staff, are chairing the expanded Sonoma County Operational Area Drought Task Force to provide a forum for multi-agency, multi-discipline information sharing and operational coordination for the duration of the drought. The Task Force meets monthly and has over forty participating agencies representing local, state, regional, and tribal partners. The Task Force has been revised to reflect the updated requirements from SB 552 and expanded to include representation from small community water systems and other stakeholder organizations.

Agreement for Emergency Water Service with CalAM

On November 2, 2021, the Board approved an agreement between the County of Sonoma and California American Water (CalAm) for a drought relief program for potable water. This program intends to supply immediate potable water for health and safety purposes in the upper Russian River region. Since the approval of the agreement, there has been no request for the drought relief program from rural residents. Public Infrastructure Department has the drought potable water program active, and with no active users, continues to monitor potable water needs in upper Russian River region. Currently, the Department of Emergency Management is working with CalAm on a one (1) year extension of the agreement.

Continuance of Local Emergency Proclamation

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Prior Board Actions:

09/13/2022: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued.

07/12/2022: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued. The Board of Directors adopted a concurrent budget resolution providing \$1,130,000 of contingency funding from the Water Security Fund to support a Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project.

05/03/2022: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued.

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03/01/2022: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued.

01/04/2022: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued.

11/02/2021: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued. Board authorized the Director of the Transportation and Public Works Department to execute the Agreement for Emergency Water Service with California-American Water Company until October 1, 2022.

09/14/2021: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued.

07/20/2021: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued.

06/18/2021: Board of Directors approved emergency drought response actions including adopting a resolution making findings of a need to perform emergency work without bidding to protect health, property, and essential public services; and delegating authority to the General Manager of Sonoma Water to take actions necessary pursuant to the restructured agreement for water supply.

06/08/2021: Board received drought conditions update and continued April 27, 2021, local emergency proclamation due to drought conditions.

05/18/2021: Board adopted a concurrent budget resolution providing \$400,000 of contingency funding to support the Santa Rosa Plain Drought Resiliency Project.

05/11/2021: Board received an update on the current status of drought conditions and adopted a concurrent resolution urging a 20% voluntary reduction in water use and other specific actions.

04/27/2021: Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution Proclaiming a Local Emergency to Drought Conditions in the Sonoma County Operational Area and Requesting the Governor to Seek a Presidential Declaration.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None.

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Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None.

Attachments:

None.

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None.