



PLACER COUNTY WATER AGENCY  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PCWA Prepares to Declare Water Shortage Emergency on Feb. 6

*AUBURN* – Reacting to the drought crisis, the Placer County Water Agency will hold a public hearing on February 6<sup>th</sup> to consider declaring a water shortage emergency in western Placer County. The agency is expected to authorize actions to supplement water supplies where possible and at the same time to implement a plan to dramatically curtail water use by all PCWA irrigation and treated water customers served by its Western Water System.

The PCWA Board of Directors on Thursday (Jan. 16) was told to expect water deliveries from its primary supply, the PG&E Drum Spaulding Project, to be less than 50 percent of normal.

The Board set the public hearing for Feb. 6 at 2 p.m. at the PCWA Business Center in Auburn.

“Unless we see a dramatic return to significant wet winter weather, we’re facing a drought of historic magnitude that may be worse than the drought of 1977,” said PCWA General Manager David A. Breninger. The General Manager was referring to the previous record drought year of 1976-77, when water supply deliveries were reduced by 50 percent to PCWA and all agency water customers.

“The agency is going to do all it can to increase its water supplies by pumping more water from the American River, increasing groundwater pumping, and collaborating with our neighbors to help one another to minimize the drought’s impacts. Even then, we’ll be short water and will have to implement a serious water reduction campaign,” said PCWA Board Chairman Joshua Alpine.

“We’ll need a strong spirit of individual cooperation and community support by every PCWA customer to make it through this difficult time,” he said.

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Members of the agency's Drought Management Team reviewed a number of water conservation and curtailment measures with the Board. "The goal will be to implement water reduction actions that preserve water supplies in order to meet essential needs of public health and safety, fire protection, and protect permanent agriculture crops," said Breninger.

Tony Firenzi, Deputy Director of Technical Services and Drought Project Manager, said "The region's watersheds are now about halfway through the normal rainfall season. There is basically no snowpack and weather forecasters are not suggesting any significant departure from current dry conditions."

"Most agency customers are normally supplied with water from the Yuba and Bear river watersheds that is delivered to PCWA by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. PG&E normally waits until April to report on seasonal water availability to PCWA. But, thus far in the year, the watershed's snowpack that PG&E and PCWA (as well as Nevada Irrigation District) rely upon is worse than in the 1977 drought," said Einar Maisch, Director of Strategic Affairs.

PCWA supplies 4,000 irrigation water accounts along 165 miles of canals and more than 34,000 treated water accounts and 5000 fire hydrants through 600 miles of pipelines.

"Our customers need to prepare for significant water use reduction. It may be necessary for PCWA customers to reduce treated water use by 25 percent and irrigation water use by up to 50 percent this year in order to balance supply and demand if the current dry weather pattern continues to hold," said Breninger.

PCWA Director of Customer Services Matt Young said, "Essentially our customers need to greatly reduce indoor use, dramatically curtail outdoor and landscape water use and eliminate water runoff and gutter flooding. The agency has been actively communicating and coordinating with our customers and many other agencies in efforts to prepare for the drought," he said.

The agency has launched a "2014 Drought Updates" webpage on its website ([www.pcwa.net](http://www.pcwa.net)) with water savings information and conservation actions, as well as the current status on the drought.

Information on PCWA board meetings may be obtained through the Clerk to the Board at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030. PCWA information is also posted at [www.pcwa.net](http://www.pcwa.net).