

**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

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TO: All State Water Project Contractors

After the driest January and February in more than 100 years, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) just conducted its third snow survey. Statewide snowpack that was at 154 percent of average on January 1 now has dwindled to just 63 percent of average. DWR is actively assessing current water supply conditions to determine whether to revise downward the current 15 percent water supply allocation, request modifications of Delta water quality and flow standards through a Temporary Urgency Change Petition to the State Water Resources Control Board as well as proceed with backfilling the notch in the West False River salinity barrier.

The extremely dry and historically warm temperatures experienced during Water Year 2021 challenged traditional water management methods. Water year 2022 started with historically low storage levels in key Northern California reservoirs, including Lake Oroville. To improve our forecast capabilities in the Feather River watershed as we look to the rest of the year, DWR recently completed its first ever Airborne Snow Observatory flights. The data from these flights reveal that the snowpack at the highest and most remote parts of the Feather River watershed is well below average. Low snowpack, challenging conditions in the Delta and, if conditions do not improve, a likely reduction to northern California water supply contracts may limit the water available for water transfers.

The time to ramp up water conservation is now. Proactive conservation measures are a prudent step for all of our agencies to prepare for the possibility of ongoing extreme dry conditions. Only through these coordinated and collective actions at the federal, State, and local level will we be able to successfully manage our water supply through 2022 and beyond. The challenges are substantial but I am confident that there is no group better able to rise to the occasion than this group of California water managers.

Sincerely,

*Karla A. Nemeth*

Karla A. Nemeth  
Director