

California Governor Issues Executive Order to Control Drought Impact

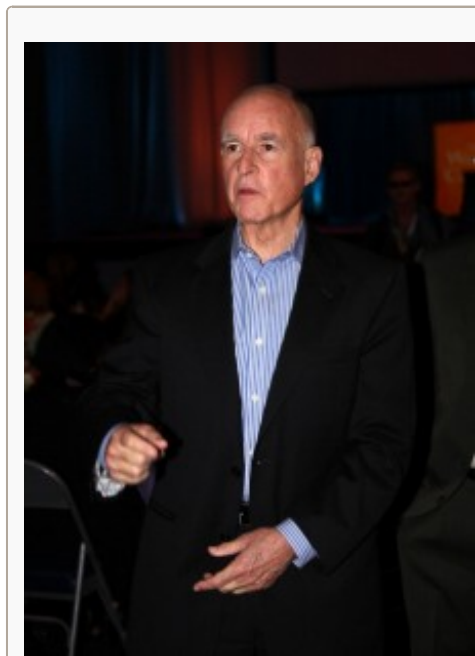
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Speaking at an environmental summit at the Getty Center, Gov. Jerry Brown announced on April 25 the issuance of a second executive order aimed at reducing the impact of California's drought.

The order includes the suspension of parts of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the rest of this year – just in time for the state's driest months.

"This order cuts red tape to help get water to farmers more quickly, ensure communities have safe drinking water, protect vulnerable species and prepare for an extreme fire season," Brown said. "I call on every city, every community, every Californian to conserve water in every way possible."

The order provides relief to farmers by lifting bureaucratic restrictions on water transfers, while directing wildlife officials to monitor Chinook salmon and other fish that could be impacted by the drought. It also helps firefighters by streamlining contracting rules for equipment purchases and allows landowners to quickly clear brush.



California Gov. Jerry Brown announced an initiative on April 25 to reduce the impact of the State's drought. (Thinkstock/Getty)

"Our fire seasons are longer and the dry season is upon us, so we have to take renewed vigilance," Brown said.

As part of the order, Californians are encouraged to: - avoid using water to clean sidewalks, driveways and parking lots; - turn off fountains and other decorative water features unless they use recycled or grey water; - limit vehicle washing at homes by going to car washes that use recycled water; and - scale back outdoor watering of lawns and landscaping to no more than two times a week.

In addition, the governor encouraged recreational facilities and professional sporting venues to implement water reduction plans.

The declaration does not include mandatory restrictions on water use.

In January, Brown declared a drought state of emergency in response to the limited snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, with California well into its third year of drought.

"Hopefully, it (the drought) will be over, but you never know. We've had long, long droughts in the past, and one never knows what we're up against in the future," Brown said.

Jeffrey Kightlinger, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, hailed Brown's announcement.

“Metropolitan is counting on enhanced conservation this year so that the Southland can maintain adequate water supplies in reserve for next year,” he said. “Every effort to conserve water can add up to real and meaningful savings that can be called upon if the drought stretches into 2015.”