

80% of California is now in extreme drought, new data show

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By Los Angeles Times staff

More than 80% of California is now in an extreme drought, according to new data by the National Weather Service.

The NWS' Drought Monitor Update for July 15 shows 81% of California in the category of extreme drought or worse, up from 78%. Three months ago, it was 68%.

[The map shows that drought](#) conditions worsened in parts of Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties.

The new data comes as officials are getting tough on water wasters.

Saying that it was time to increase conservation in the midst of one of the worst droughts in decades, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted drought regulations that give local agencies the authority to fine those who waste water up to \$500 a day.

Many Southern California cities, including Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Long Beach, already have mandatory restrictions in place.

Updated results of a state board survey show that statewide, urban water use in May increased 1% compared to the May average of the previous three years.

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That rise was mostly driven by an 8% jump in coastal Southern California.

In most other hydrologic regions, May use declined. The biggest drop was in the Sacramento River area, where it fell 13%.

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