

## State water leaders project 10% deliveries next year, but that could change

By Mark Grossi

Encouraged by the wet weather forecast, the state this week projected a 10% delivery of river water next year to the State Water Project and its two major customers, Southern California and Kern County.

The [California Department of Water Resources](#) said the stormy weather is a hopeful sign after three years of drought.

“But we must be cautious and preserve adequate storage in reservoirs should conditions turn dry again,” said DWR director Mark Corwin.

State water leaders say California needs a storm season with 150% of average precipitation to refill reservoirs, which are badly depleted. [The state's major reservoirs](#) are down to 60% of average for this time of year.

The two largest reservoirs in California — Oroville and Shasta — are mostly empty at about a quarter of their capacity. Millerton Lake, on the San Joaquin River northeast of Fresno, is at 34%, and Pine Flat Reservoir, on the Kings River east of the city, is 12%.

The state's announcement this week does not include the [federal Central Valley Project](#), the larger of California's two major water projects and supplier for many central San Joaquin Valley farmers. The federal project usually makes delivery projections in February.

Last year, the state's early projection was 5% deliveries for 2014. It dropped to zero in January, but February and March storms pushed it back up to 5%.

Federal farm contractors were not as lucky. The Central Valley Project allocation remained at zero for more than 2 million acres of farming. West Valley farmers with water rights dating back to the 1800s received some water from the federal project, as did wildlife refuges and cities.

State water officials said the 10% deliveries announced this week for the State Water Project could be moved up or down, depending on the storms over the next several weeks.

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