

Gov. Jerry Brown, lawmakers to propose \$1 billion drought relief bill

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With California entering its fourth year of drought, Gov. Jerry Brown and legislative leaders will propose more than \$1 billion in emergency legislation Thursday for flood protection and water supply projects and to alleviate impacts of the drought.

The legislation, similar to a measure passed last year, includes money for upgrading farm equipment with low-polluting equipment and for emergency food for farmworkers out of work due to the drought, a source said.

The bill's funding will rely on a combination of sources, including the General Fund, revenue from California's cap-and-trade program, flood bond revenue and money from the water bond voters passed last year.

The legislation comes after California regulators on Tuesday ordered water agencies in California to limit the number of days each week customers can water their lawns, an unprecedented measure.

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Brown's office announced late Wednesday that the governor, Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León and Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins would present the legislation at a news conference at the Capitol on Thursday.

Brown issued an emergency order in January 2014 in which he appealed to Californians to reduce water use by 20 percent, a threshold the state first met in December. The Democratic governor said last month that he was not prepared to impose mandatory water restrictions.

At the time, he said he was "reluctant to expand the coercive power of state authority, so wherever we can engage a voluntary citizenship, I'm for that."

Brown said the state was doing "pretty well" conserving water voluntarily.

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