

Gov. Jerry Brown to attend snowpack measurement near Lake Tahoe

By Chris Megerian

Gov. Jerry Brown will be on hand Wednesday morning near Lake Tahoe when officials measure the state's drought-depleted snowpack, his office announced.

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As of Monday, the snowpack's water content was at 6% of normal for this time of year. The previous record low for April 1 was 25% last year.

Snow levels are normally a critical source of water for the state, feeding rivers and reservoirs when it melts in the spring.

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Brown and lawmakers have responded to the drought with new legislation, such as a \$1-billion plan the governor signed last week.

It includes \$127.8 million for food and water supplies and immediate measures to protect the environment from the effects of the drought. But most of the funding is for long-term projects such as recycling sewage water, improving treatment facilities and supporting desalination plants.

The legislation was similar to a \$687-million plan approved last year. Only a third of that money has been spent so far.

In both bills, there was little new funding. Most of the money was included in previous budget proposals and will now be spent faster than previously scheduled, or it was in bond measures that were already approved by voters.

Jonas Minton, a water policy advisor for the Planning and Conservation League, said the legislation would have little immediate effect on the drought.

"It's not going to help out in the next two or three years for the larger urban areas or agriculture," he said. "Laws cannot create water."

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