



External Affairs Management Report

Update on Water Supply & Conservation Messaging

Item # 8a
March 13, 2023



The Question Everyone is Asking

A10 TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023

Los Angeles Times

LATIMES.COM/OPINION

OPINION

EDITORIAL

How can California still be in drought after a wet winter?

The rain and snow are great for our reservoirs but not enough to wipe out the state's water debt.

AFTER MORE than two months of atmospheric rivers and bomb cyclones, amid a supersized Sierra snowcap, and with more precipitation forecast for the rest of the month, isn't California's drought over?

The U.S. Drought Monitor reports that yes, 17% of California is now out of drought. Most of the rest of the state is quite wet as well, although it remains in some level of "drought" as the term is defined by the Drought Monitor.

Only 17%? How is that possible? We've had more rain and snow than in the entire winter of 2019, when the state was last declared drought-free.

The sensitive discrepancy is the result of

Unfortunately, much of that narrative is myth, and in any case irrelevant to the terrain and hydrology of California in an era of heat waves, longer summers and urban living.

Drought was never the right word to apply to this state's dry streaks. Californians need a term that describes not just how much water is coming in, but how much we use every day and how much we save for later. We need a word or phrase that suggests how long we can stand in the shower, whether farmers can keep growing pistachios and if the forests and cities will once again burn when summer comes.

Instead of drought, we should talk about going into water debt, and refer to wet periods as winning the water lottery.

And isn't a wet winter like this one a lot like winning the lottery? Most jackpot winners expect their lifestyles to change forever. But then they pay off their debts and the taxes on their winnings, and indulge in a few extravagances. Next thing they know, their debt has returned, and they're back to square one.



FRED GREAVES California Department of Water Resources

SNOW IS measured during the California Department of Water Resources' Sierra Nevada survey in January.

jackpot that paid out during the 20th century, which was — the geological records tell us — an abnormally wet period.

This is not a uniquely California story. At the end of the Dust Bowl drought, the rains returned, but farmers went bankrupt and the

Topline Messages



Recent winter storms are welcome news and are helping to relieve the intensity of the historic three-year drought



But California is vulnerable to extreme and variable weather. We need to continually adapt how we manage and invest in our water systems.



While we are seeing some relief locally and with our supplies imported from Northern California, our other imported water supply - the Colorado River - is in trouble.



That's why we all must keep using water wisely and conserving in our homes, gardens, businesses, and communities. MWD and local agencies are here to help.

Messaging Platform

Primary Message

Water conservation must be a way of life for all of us in Southern California, rain or shine.

Secondary Message

Metropolitan and local water agencies offer rebates, grants landscape classes, water-wise garden inspiration and lots of helpful tips on bewaterwise.com

Update on
Communications & Messaging_

Content Outreach Strategy

Leveraging Big Results
with Minimal Dollars

Earned and Social Media

More than **200 news stories** about MWD on radio, online, digital & TV with publicity value of **nearly \$3 million**

120,000 visitors to bewaterwise.com from social media



Messaging Materials

Fact sheets, updated website content on **Colorado River** and current Southern California **water supply conditions**

In-store **marketing** for rebate-eligible products



Community Engagement

In-stadium ads and partnership activities with **Angel City Football Club**

Sponsoring and exhibit booths at **community events** this spring





Colorado River Fact Sheets



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Evolving Messaging Based on Conditions.

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WATER YOUR
YARD - NOT
SPRINKLERS.

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Update on
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In-Language for Outdoor Advertising



It's time to be serious about
using less water. (Korean)



Climate change means water
conservation now. (Spanish)



A rebate today saves water
for their future. (Armenian)



We can all do more to save
water now. (Vietnamese)



Now is the time to do our part.
Use less water. (Chinese)



Being waterwise means not
being wasteful. (Tagalog)

Update on
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Going Big with Spring/ Summer Advertising



- World's largest digital billboard
- Collaborations with state's Save our Water campaign
- Regional survey of public attitudes
- Social media influencers
- Paid media - radio, outdoor, digital, English and Spanish TV

