

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT: ORANGE COUNTY IS PREPARED

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Drought is once again upon us. However, even after enduring the third driest year in California's history, we have sufficient water to serve Orange County, thanks to our historic water recycling and efficiency efforts and the record amount of water Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) has in storage. It is a remarkable accomplishment that has much to do with how efficient Southern California has learned to be with our water use and our tremendous investment in wastewater recycling and water storage.

As some brace for what may be the start of a 'megadrought,' our area is well-positioned to manage what Mother Nature brings our way.

As many remember, 2015 was more difficult for water providers when the state-mandated reducing residential water use by 25 percent. Here in Orange County, we did our part, exceeding the 25 percent target. Even better, those water-efficient behaviors didn't all stop when the rains returned. Demands have stayed lower ever since. With the potential severity of this drought, it is only prudent for us to redouble our efforts to reduce our water demands in a common sense way. We, at MWD OC, will increase our outreach to inform our residents and businesses on things they might employ at this time.

While we need to continue our efforts to reduce demand and our investment in cost effective local water projects we need to also continue to shore up our critical imported supplies. The most significant piece of the puzzle: The Delta Conveyance Project. The Delta Tunnel (Tunnel) will allow us to capture water during storms while protecting existing freshwater from climate change, sea-level rise, and seismic events. The project will better protect the delicate Delta ecosystem and provide funds for habitat restoration.

This drought is another reminder that if we as a State do not invest in our water supplies at all levels, we are sure to be sentenced to perpetual drought emergencies.