

## California Water Action Plan and Save Our Water Program Public Education Campaigns

### Overview

The California Department of Water Resources, in partnership with the Association of California Water Agencies, has expanded the Save Our Water Program's public education campaigns to promote and reach statewide water conservation goals. As California's statewide conservation education program, Save Our Water is reaching the public through an innovative package of outreach efforts involving outdoor media, radio ads, popular digital and social media, and on-the-street efforts. The Program also launched a new website, in English and Spanish, at [SaveOurWater.com](http://SaveOurWater.com) to communicate tips and tools to empower Californians to reduce water use as part of their current "Keep Saving CA" campaign. Save Our Water recently launched a new phase of ads, utilizing television, radio, billboards, and direct mailers, to encourage water users in the State to "Fix It For Good" by repairing leaks, installing low flow toilets, and replacing turf with drought tolerant landscaping.

### Background

Warmer temperatures, altered patterns of precipitation and runoff, reduced snowpack, changing hydrology, and rising sea levels are increasingly challenging water supply management in California. Moreover, increased drought conditions from a change in rainfall, runoff patterns, and warmer temperatures has led to drier soils that result in more frequent, intense forest fires. As these climatic events are expected to become more common due to climate change, concerns have grown around the availability, quantity, and distribution of water in California.

With four consecutive years of drought conditions across California and the lowest manual snowpack readings on historic record (a main source of California's water supply), the Governor declared a state of emergency in 2014 and directed State agencies to take numerous actions in response to drought. Many of these actions are included in California's [Water Action Plan](#) (2014) which lays out a comprehensive, five year approach for the State to achieve sustainable water management. Water conservation, integrated water management across all levels of government,

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protection and restoration of ecosystems, drought management, sustainable groundwater management, drinking water supply, flood protection, and sustainable financing opportunities are among the main action areas under this effort.

To specifically address water supply concerns under the *Plan*, California determined that permanent increases in water use efficiency were necessary to address the effects of climate change, meet the demands of a growing population, and increase economic productivity. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders and the *Plan*, the State Water Board issued a regulation to ensure that water agencies, their customers, and state residents increase water conservation to achieve mandatory statewide reductions in water use by 25 percent, with some communities facing reduction targets up to 36 percent.

### Save Our Water: An Innovative Public Education Program Overview

As part of the State's broader water conservation effort, the Governor required that the DWR, in partnership with the Association of California Water Agencies, expand the Save Our Water Program's public education campaigns to promote and reach statewide water conservation goals. "Save our Water" is California's conservation education program. Key initiatives of the Program include a new voluntary conservation education campaign, website, and toolkit to help Californians modify their daily water use.

## The “Keep Saving California” Education Campaign:

The Save Our Water Program, in partnership with the Association of California Water Agencies, recently launched a new public education campaign called “Keep Saving CA.” The campaign is intended to help Californians make lasting, permanent decreases in their daily water use in response to the mandated statewide reduction targets. The campaign is reaching the public through outdoor media, radio programs, popular digital and social media, and on-the-street efforts.

**Save Our Water Website:** The Program also launched a new website at [SaveOurWater.com](http://SaveOurWater.com) to communicate tips and tools to empower Californian's to adjust their water use. This new website allows users to visually explore actions they can take to save water both inside and outside the home, such as “limiting outdoor water use and letting lawns fade to gold for the summer.” The website contains tips for saving water, conservation practices performed by the public, news releases, and facts about drought and climate impacts currently happening in the State. It also serves as a platform to bridge the water conservation conversation to major social media outlets such as [Twitter](https://twitter.com), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com), and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com). The website provides a [Toolkit](#) containing materials for special campaigns, social media graphics, and signage to

help other agencies and municipalities partake in the public education campaign. This way, localities can determine the most effective materials and messaging to fit their specific community needs. As a single easily accessible form of public information, the website empowers both water managers and a diverse array of customers to play a key role in water use and efficiency.

**Partnerships and Assistance:** As part of the larger *Plan*, the State of California funds technical and financial assistance for water conservation actions and public education campaigns, including those carried out by the Save Our Water Program. To that end, Save Our Water supports local water agencies in their efforts to educate consumers about the importance of saving water. The Program is currently working with partners to help spread the word in various ways, such as working with Starbucks to hang informational posters on water use and initiating water appliance rebate programs. The Program is also connecting the drought and importance of water conservation efforts to reducing the incidence of wildfires during the summer season. By educating California’s public about the drought and engaging them in the process to relieve pressure on the State’s water supply, the Program is helping to change consumer behaviors that can lead to long-term, sustainable water use.

