



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

June 14, 2021

PRESIDENT
Dennis Rodoni
4TH DISTRICT

Governor Gavin Newsom
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

VICE PRESIDENT
Judy Arnold
5TH DISTRICT

Re: Marin County Declaration of Emergency Due to Drought Conditions

Dear Governor Newsom:

2ND VICE PRESIDENT
Damon Connolly
1ST DISTRICT

On behalf of the Marin County Board of Supervisors, I write to respectfully but urgently request that you further expand the statewide declaration of emergency relating to drought conditions in California to include the County of Marin. We also urge that you request a presidential declaration of emergency in concert with the 41 California counties already included in the statewide emergency.

Katie Rice
2ND DISTRICT

With reference to Attachment A, Marin County sits entirely within the most severe intensity of drought ([D4 - Exceptional Drought](#)) in California.

Stephanie Moulton-Peters
3RD DISTRICT

Marin County and its two largest water agencies, the Marin Municipal Water District and the North Marin Water District, urge the state's assistance by being included among the state's 41 counties already added to the state's drought emergency. Marin is dependent upon water from the Russian River in Sonoma County, declared in April due to current and projected impacts to its watershed, which is in the process of significantly curtailing water allocations to Marin County, among other areas.

Matthew H. Hymel
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
CLERK OF THE BOARD

Diane Patterson
ASSISTANT CLERK OF THE BOARD

While we appreciate that funding may be included in the FY 2021-22 state budget for impacts relating to the drought, these funds are anticipated to be competitive and take time for real, on the ground, impact. Marin County is in a state of emergency now, as declared by its Board of Supervisors May 18.

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3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 329
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 473 7331 T
415 473 3645 F
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www.marincounty.org/bos

Current Drought Impacts, Marin Municipal Water District and North Marin Water District

Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) and North Marin Water District (NMWD) are Marin County's largest drinking water providers, serving more than 250,000 people within the County and its cities and towns. MMWD's water supply comes 75% from local reservoir storage in and around Mount Tamalpais and West Marin, and 25% from the Sonoma County Water Agency's (SCWA) Russian River Watershed. Conversely, 75% of NMWD's water supply comes from SCWA and 25% from local reservoir storage. Water from Sonoma County is in process of being significantly curtailed to Marin County, among other areas.

MMWD's total storage capacity is currently at just over 36,000 acre-feet, less than one-year of water supply for MMWD (including environmental releases). Without a change in the current circumstances and given the uncertainty of continuing drought, MMWD may have less than one year of water supply remaining. NMWD's wholesale water supply from the Russian River Watershed is also low and will likely go lower. Your office has already declared a state of emergency in

the Russian River watershed due to low water storage from lack of rainfall and runoff. Drought emergency restrictions for the Russian River are pending before the State Water Board.

There are drought-related needs that are common to both water districts, and specific focused needs by MMWD. The following presents both common and specific needs of the Marin County water districts to carry out drought responses that are consistent with the Governor's Proclamations of a state of Emergency of April 21 and May 10, 2021, and beyond.

Common Needs of MMWD and NMWD

- Suspension of provisions of the Government Code, Public Resources Code, Division 13 (commencing with section 21000) and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division, and Public Contract Code, to the extent necessary to address the drought in Marin County and to support the MMWD key projects identified below.
- Direction to the State Water Board to consider modifying requirements for reservoir releases to ensure adequate, minimum water supply for critical purposes.
- An Emergency drought declaration for Marin County that reinforces mandatory water curtailments enacted by both water districts in April, 2021, and is consistent with the Emergency drought declaration already issued regarding our wholesale water supply from Sonoma County.

Specific Needs by MMWD

- Direction to state agencies to prioritize assistance and support for the key projects identified below, including, as necessary, requests to move water, where appropriate.
- Financial and other assistance from various permitting and regulatory state agencies for the following key emergency water supply projects:
 - A water transfer project, including the consideration of the placement of a pipeline across the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.
 - The construction of a desalination facility.

Marin Municipal Water District and North Marin Water District respectfully urge that Marin County immediately be added to the list of counties covered by the Governor's Proclamations to assure the critical aid necessary for the two districts' drought responses. Further, MMWD and NMWD urge the Governor's Office to declare a full statewide emergency and request the Federal government declare that a Major Disaster exists in the State of California due to drought. This would facilitate FEMA reimbursement for immediate drought response needs.

Current Drought Impacts, Marin County Agriculture

In addition to the impacts upon our water agency customers, the drought impacts to agriculture in Marin are severe and rapidly deteriorating. Agriculture is a vital sector in Marin County's economy, with a gross value of all products nearing \$100 million. Farmland represents approximately 167,000 acres, or 50 percent of the land in Marin. Thirteen ranchers, mostly dairies, are currently hauling water multiple times per day. More dairies will need to haul water in coming months. Hauling water continuously is not sustainable; a dairy on average uses about 15,000 gallons of water per day.

Feed costs for ranchers have risen 50% or more and will continue to rise due to low supply and high demand. Much of the available feed is of poor quality due to drought conditions in California and several other western states. Most operations have had to reduce their herd size to stay viable. This is a significant financial loss for ranching operations since the current price received for the animals is very low and the repercussions of having to rebuild a herd for specific traits and genetics takes many years. One dairy thus far, McClure's Dairy, has gone out of business directly due to the drought. There is significant concern of other operations closing their doors as the drought continues. Further, approximately 50% of the 300 acres of cropland is being fallowed due directly to lack of water.

Needs of Agriculture in Marin

- The single most important thing the state could do at this time for agricultural interests in Marin and many other parts of the state dependent upon agriculture is to request a federal declaration, opening the door for reimbursement and other federal assistance as the drought accelerates and ranchers and dairies run completely out of water.
- There is a critical need to financially support ranchers, primarily dairies, with the purchase of feed now and throughout 2021, especially organic feed (beyond what the Farm Services Agency (FSA) can provide). The FSA only provides support for feed costs for a limited number of months and only for a portion of the costs.
- There is a long-term funding need for improved water capture, storage, and supply systems to help ensure drought resiliency in the future. Much of the long-term structural needs should be provided through programs sponsored by FSA, NRCS, and RCD's, but the potential scale of need is very concerning and will require additional support.
- Streamlining of requirements to install new wells, upgrade existing wells, develop or redevelop natural springs, and build water capture systems to ensure greater drought resiliency starting in fall 2021. Cooperation from State agencies like the State and Regional Water Boards, Department of Water Resources, and California Coastal Commission will be necessary to facilitate water development projects.
- Provide financial support for crop producers that have had to fallow their land. There is no known source of funding to ensure these operations remain viable into the future. These small to medium crop producers are vital to our region's agricultural economy.
- Expediate addition of watering livestock as an allowable use for recycled water in the Title 22 criteria.
- In times of drought declaration provide for emergency temporary use of recycled water for any use listed in Title 22 criteria, regardless of listed uses in a recycled water producer's filed permit.

As Marin County and our local municipal and private water systems that depend on rainfall for their yearly supply seek out additional and more costly sources of water and continue extraordinary efforts to conserve water for essential uses, we respectfully urge the state to expand its statewide declaration of emergency to include Marin.

We also urge that you request a presidential disaster declaration of emergency in concert with the 41 California counties already included in the statewide emergency to allow for reimbursement and other federal assistance as the drought accelerates. This will also underscore the urgency of residents' needs to conserve water throughout the summer and fall.

We appreciate the Governor's Office reviewing Marin County's drought status and requested inclusion in the state drought proclamation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Rodoni". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dennis" and last name "Rodoni" clearly distinguishable.

Dennis Rodoni, President
Marin County Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Mike McGuire
Assembly Member Marc Levine
Marin County Board of Supervisors
Ben Horenstein, General Manager, Marin Municipal Water District
Drew McIntyre, General Manager, North Marin Water District

Attachment A

