



Thoughts on Drought Assessment and Reporting

“Measuring, Quantifying, and Reporting Drought Impacts”

Western States Water Council and California Department of Water Resources

David Bolland
August 5, 2013



About ACWA

450 public water agencies

Responsible for 90% of delivered urban and agricultural water statewide

Includes state and federal water contractors; wholesalers and retailers (but not investor owned utilities or mutual water companies)

Includes biggest CA municipal utilities and largest irrigation districts down to very small rural community systems and irrigation districts

Drought in California



Local water agencies have diverse sources of water supply, most are connected to California's unparalleled system of water infrastructure consisting of interrelated federal, state, regional and local water supply projects

Yet increasing regulatory compliance requirements, drought, and climate change are all stressors on this system

The impacts of drought have often been quite varied geographically depending on "where you are" in the system and how a given water year unfolds

This means drought impacts must be measured and reported at the local scale

Measuring and Reporting Drought

Helps water agencies with local water management planning to bolster supply reliability

Helps water agencies identify and communicate potential costs of unreliability

Helps ACWA advocate on state and federal investment decisions associated with the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) and other financial assistance programs such as the 2014 Water Bond



Thoughts about Measuring and Reporting Impacts

Past experience in California with conflicting reports of modeled socioeconomic impacts -- need objective, unbiased data sources

Information about impacts (not water delivery amounts, but the impacts of low deliveries) is hard to find -- especially expressed in monetary terms

If dry, next year will be California's 3rd dry year – we know that impacts will occur so NOW is the time to get a measuring system in place



What if Next Year is Another Dry Year?

- ✓ Some urban retail water agencies will likely start asking for voluntary or even mandatory conservation (almost none this year).
- ✓ Big reductions to growers in some large agricultural water agencies

How might we measure impacts of these cutbacks?

- Increased agricultural land fallowing, higher unemployment rates for farm laborers, increased payouts in federal crop insurance or disaster assistance programs, other economic impacts?

Can We Develop More Tools to Help “Tell the Story”?

What are the impacts of drought-related wildfires on water infrastructure and water treatment costs?

Has subsidence increased due to increased groundwater pumping? How about energy use?

Can we develop a consistent approach to measuring and reporting across different types of water users?

urban - aggregate cost of landscape replacement?
agriculture - acres of fallowed land; crop losses?
recreation - loss of revenues?



What Can ACWA Do?

Information Clearinghouse and Policy Leadership

- ✓ Keep ACWA members informed
- ✓ Track and report local conditions and conservation measures (as during the 2007-09 drought)
- ✓ Survey members on impacts and needs for assistance
- ✓ Make current information available to reporters, legislators, leaders
- ✓ Links to other authoritative information sources (state, federal, other western states)



Public Outreach and Education

SAVE OUR WATER campaign in partnership with DWR:

- ✓ Recognized, coordinated messaging
- ✓ Online resources / web site with consumer information
- ✓ Collaterals, outreach materials ready use
- ✓ Possible radio or TV PSAs or social media campaign?



On-going Policy Leadership

- ✓ Helping water agencies communicate with their key local decision-makers; cities, counties, business leaders
- ✓ Helping state and federal decision-makers clarify policy and programmatic needs and responses
- ✓ Continued advocacy for needed investments in water management (e.g. Statewide Water Action Plan)
- ✓ Providing a forum for long-term education about water



Questions ?

David Bolland
Senior Regulatory Advocate

daveb@acwa.com

(916) 441-4545

