

Howard N. Dashiell
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION

Road Commissioner
County Engineer, RCE 42001
County Surveyor, PLS 7148



FUNCTIONS

Administration & Business Services
Airports
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COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
340 LAKE MENDOCINO DRIVE
UKIAH, CALIFORNIA 95482-9432
VOICE (707) 463-4363 FAX (707) 463-5474

NEWS RELEASE

TO: MENDOCINO COUNTY NEWS MEDIA
FR: MENDOCINO COUNTY WATER AGENCY

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Mendocino County Releases Draft Drought Resilience Plan for Public Comment

On March 26, 2025, the Mendocino County Water Agency (MCWA) released a comprehensive draft Drought Resilience Plan for public comment. Mendocino County's Drought Resilience Plan is a stand-alone document that will be implemented along other state, County, and local planning documents.

The Drought Resilience Plan finds that 84% of domestic wells and 93% of state small water systems are at high risk of being impacted by water shortages and droughts, underscoring the importance of preparing for drought in Mendocino County.

For normal and wetter than normal water years, the plan identifies long-term mitigation actions to prepare for future droughts. The DRP also outlines a range of emergency response actions that would be triggered either Countywide or regionally (coastal and inland) at moderate and severe stages of drought.

The Drought Resilience Plan is being developed in fulfillment of the County's obligations under Senate Bill 552 (SB 552).

SB 552 Overview

SB 552 requires state and local governments to share responsibility in planning and responding to water shortage events, particularly for state small water systems and communities supplied by domestic wells. This legislation requires all Counties in California to develop a DRP and establish a standing County Drought and Water Shortage Task Force Group (Drought Task Force).

Since 2021, when Governor Newsom signed SB 552 into law amid the historic 2020-2022 drought, Mendocino County has actively held regular Drought Task Force meetings to address water scarcity. In June 2024, MCWA hired EKI Environment & Water, Inc., as a technical lead and commenced development of the DRP.

DRP Development

At the State's direction, the DRP was developed in four main sections: data collection, vulnerability/risk assessment, identification of short-term response actions and long-term mitigation strategies, and plan implementation. All four sections have now been completed, culminating in a draft DRP that is open for public comment from March 26 until April 25, 2025.

To incorporate public discussion and input into the development process, DRP agenda items were presented at the Drought Task Force meetings under the General Government Standing Committee (GGSC) meetings. Additionally, the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) has held two public workshops during development of the draft DRP.

After the commenting period closes on April 25 and comments are reviewed and addressed, a resolution will be brought to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors on May 20, 2025, to authorize County staff to upload the final DRP to the DWR portal.

Why Comment?

Public participation is vital to the success of the DRP. By contributing your insights, experiences, and feedback, you will help shape both immediate and long-term strategies for addressing drought and water shortages. We seek participation from key community stakeholders, including domestic well owners, residents relying on local small water systems, tribes, and public water suppliers.

To submit a comment, please complete the General Commenting Form on the County DRP webpage. To allow County staff time to review and respond to comments, all comments must be submitted by April 25, 2025.

For updates and further information about the DRP process, please visit the County Drought Portal and DRP website, and sign up for email updates.

- The draft DRP is available on the Mendocino County Drought Resilience Plan webpage: <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/water-agency/drought-water-conservation/drought-resilience-plan>
- Submit a public comment via our online form: <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/water-agency/drought-water-conservation/drought-resilience-plan/drp-general-commenting-form>
- Drought resources for community members are available on our Drought Portal, which was revamped in tandem with DRP development: <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/mendocino-county-water-agency/drought-water-conservation>
- Sign up for DRP updates: <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/water-agency/drought-water-conservation/drought-resilience-plan/get-drp-email-updates>