

# STATE OF COLORADO

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## Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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TO: CWCB Board Members

John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor

FROM: Veva Deheza  
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Water Supply Planning Section

Mike King  
DNR Executive Director

Jennifer L. Gimbel  
CWCB Director

DATE: July 6, 2012

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item #24, July 17-18, 2012 Board Meeting**  
**Water Supply Planning - Statewide Drought Update and Response**

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**Staff Recommendation:** *This is an informational item only. No Board action is required.*

### Background:

The 2012 Water Year began October 2011 and runs through September 2012. So far, it has brought below average precipitation and above average temperatures to much of the State.

Currently 100% of the State of Colorado is classified as experiencing severe, extreme or exceptional drought as determined by the United State Drought Monitor. Of that 65% of the state is experiencing extreme drought while 5½% is classified as in exceptional drought conditions. Much of the west slope of Colorado saw 0% of normal precipitation in June, while other areas of Colorado saw between 0% and 70% of average June precipitation. The last three months temperatures have been above average for most of Colorado, with the month of June 4 to 8 degrees above average for most of Colorado. High temperatures such as this exacerbate dry conditions. In addition, all major reservoirs in the Upper Colorado River Basin are below their July storage average. Daily inflows are also much below average for this time of year.

As a result of the continuing warm and dry conditions U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack granted a request from Governor John Hickenlooper declaring that 62 of the state's 64 counties qualify for federal disaster relief because of drought conditions. The Secretary stated "The Department of Agriculture has reviewed the Loss Assessment Reports and has determined that there were sufficient production losses in 62 counties to warrant a Secretarial disaster designation," a letter from Vilsack says. "Therefore, I am designating all Colorado counties, except Delta and San Juan counties, as primary disaster areas due to losses caused by drought, excessive heat, and high winds that occurred from Jan. 1, 2012, and continuing."

In addition, The Drought Task Force is in the process of recommending an elevation of the State Drought Plan activation to Phase 3, as well as statewide activation of the Wildfire and Tourism Impact Task Forces.

Staff will present the latest information on drought conditions. Information on reservoir levels, stream flows, potential response actions, and related topics will be presented.

**The next Water Availability Task Force meeting will be held on July 20, 2012.**