

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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TO: CWCB Board Members

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

FROM: Taryn Hutchins-Cabibi
Water Supply Planning Section

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DNR Executive Director

Jennifer L. Gimbel
CWCB Director

DATE: September 4, 2012

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item #16, September 27-28, 2012 Board Meeting
Water Supply Planning - Statewide Drought Update and Response**

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 50% of the state is experiencing extreme drought while 14% is classified as experiencing exceptional drought conditions.

Much of the central mountains saw near normal precipitation in August while the eastern plains and Front Range saw between 30-70% of normal precipitation for the month. Many part of the northeastern portion of the state received 0% of their average August rainfall. Above average temperatures have persisted throughout much of the summer with late August showing temperature anomalies 6-12 degrees above average for the northeastern plains of the state. High temperatures exacerbate dry conditions. In addition, all major reservoirs in the Upper Colorado River Basin are below their September storage average, ranging from 70-90% of average; and most have experienced a larger than normal decrease for this time of year.

In addition, Governor Hickenlooper elevated the State Drought Plan activation to Phase 3 for the agricultural sector, which continues to be the hardest hit sector this year.

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