

Editorial: Calif. needs to do more to save water

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California is in the third year of its worst drought in decades. But you wouldn't know it by looking at how much water the state's residents and businesses are using. According to a recent state survey, Californians cut the amount of water they used in the first five months of the year by just 5 percent, far short of the 20 percent reduction Gov. Jerry Brown called for in January. In some parts of the state, like the San Diego area, water use has actually increased from 2013.

Without much stronger conservation measures, the state, much of which is arid or semiarid, could face severe water shortages if the drought does not break next year. Los Angeles recently recorded its lowest rainfall for two consecutive years, and climate change will likely make drought a persistent condition, according to the National Climate Assessment report published in May.

Yet, even now, 70 percent of water districts have not imposed reasonable mandatory restrictions on watering lawns and keeping backyard pools filled. The State Water Resources Control Board is to consider placing restrictions on some outdoor water uses like washing paved surfaces at a meeting on July 15.

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