

Big month for water conservation in Calif.

By Bettina Boxall and Rosanna Xia, Los Angeles Times

After Gov. Jerry Brown ordered a 25 percent reduction in urban water use statewide, regulators spent much of the spring chastising water districts for not conserving enough during California's stubborn drought.

Data released Thursday suggest the message is getting through.

Californians cut back their urban water use last month by nearly a third compared with July 2013, aided by rare summer storms and stepped-up local enforcement. And the number of water districts deemed to be severely out of step with the state's demands – those falling 15 percentage points or more short of their conservation goal – dropped sharply.

The 31 percent statewide reduction is even better than the 27 percent recorded in June, the first month the targets were in effect. And so far state officials have not needed to carry out their threat of stiff fines to get the attention of local agencies.

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