

Summary of the Findings of the Water Shortage/Drought Assistance Survey

In times of below average precipitation, Water Users in the USBR Mid-Pacific Region may receive reduced water supplies. The Water Conservation Field Service Program identified a need for assistance within the Region for Water Shortage Contingency Planning. A survey was conducted to help identify types of assistance that would best help water users mitigate the potential effects of reduced water supplies or drought.

Fifty organizations, representing a wide range of Bureau projects and units and including both agricultural and urban water suppliers, were interviewed, either by telephone or face-to-face interviews. The results of these interviews are detailed below.

Information was collected on the fiscal, technical and regulatory water shortage needs of each organization and its customers. The information presented below indicates the programs which the largest number of organizations identified as beneficial. It is important to note that while some programs seem to have minimal support, those programs may be of critical importance to the organizations needing that assistance.

Organizations identified interest in financial support for:

- Evaluating distribution system efficiency (33%) and implementing improvements (85%), such as SCADA (30%)
- Purchasing water bank water or funding water transfers (50%)
- Drilling new groundwater wells and rehabilitating existing wells (43%)
- Leasing or renting emergency pumps and pipes (26%)
- Water quality tests for shortage supplies (22%)
- Spill capture and return systems (15%)

Organizations identified the following programs as those with the most interest to their agricultural customers:

- Evaluating irrigation system efficiency (85%) and implementing improvements (85%)
- Upgrading existing pumps to improve efficiency (77%)
- Installing on-farm return systems (62)
- Drilling new groundwater wells and rehabilitating existing wells (49%)
- Water quality tests for shortage supplies (31%)

Organizations identified the following programs as those with the most interest to their urban customers:

- Rebates for the purchase and installation of efficient plumbing hardware (100%)
- Rebates for the purchase and installation of efficient landscape irrigation equipment (100%)

Organizations identified a need for technical assistance in the following areas:

- Identification of water purchase/transfer opportunities and assistance with necessary paperwork (65%)
- Crop water use data and the use of CIMIS ETo information (38%)
- Preparation of a Water Management Plan (29%)
- Preparation of a Water Shortage Contingency Plan (17%)

Organizations identified a need for regulatory flexibility in the following areas:

- Transfer restrictions and place of use limitations (65%)
- Warren Act rules, transfer costs and water quality restrictions (various)

Organizations also identified a need for public relations assistance and educational materials:

- USBR Public Service Announcements that identify a regional problem (26%)
- Water conservation educational materials for customers, the press and schools (28%)