



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 22-0205

Agenda Date: 2/15/2022

Item No.: 2.1.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Receive Information on Drought and Water Supply Conditions, Future Planning Update, and Call for Conservation.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive Information on Drought and Water Supply Conditions, Future Planning Update, and Call for Conservation.

SUMMARY:

Drought Conditions

On June 9, 2021, the Valley Water Board of Directors declared a water shortage emergency condition pursuant to California Water Code §350, called for water use restrictions of 15% compared to 2019, and urged the County of Santa Clara to proclaim a local emergency. The County ratified a proclamation of a drought emergency on June 22, 2021. Valley Water has been working closely with our retailers in the face of this drought. The City of Santa Clara City Manager in her role as the Director of Emergency Services declared a local drought emergency. The Santa Clara City Council ratified the emergency proclamation at the scheduled City Council meeting on July 13, 2021. The emergency proclamation in Santa Clara required the implementation of the City of Santa Clara Water Shortage Contingency Plan (Stage 2), with modifications.

Despite storms received since October 2021, Santa Clara County remains in drought. The U.S. Drought Monitor Report from January 25, 2022, indicates that the county is in severe drought. The northern Sierra Nevada snowpack, a primary source of imported water, has shown improvement as a result of the storms, but is slightly below normal as of February 1, 2022.

Reflecting critically dry conditions across the state, the Central Valley Project and State Water Project drastically reduced imported water allocations in 2021, which typically comprise half of Valley Water's annual water supply. Valley Water entered 2022 with over 65,000 acre-feet of imported supplies stored in San Luis Reservoir. This amount is higher than normal and is intended to provide reliability in the event dry conditions continue in 2022, while also mitigating for the reduction in storage in Anderson Reservoir. On January 20, 2022, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) stated that the 2022 SWP allocation is 15 percent, which may be adjusted for human health and safety. Allocations on the Central Valley Project (CVP) are expected to be announced by the U.S. Bureau of

Reclamation (Reclamation) in late February.

Although groundwater levels have declined over recent years due to the drought, groundwater conditions improved in fall 2021 due to seasonal recovery, emergency imported water supplies, and water use reduction by the community. However, if dry conditions continue and the Board's water use reduction target is not met, there remains some risk of resumed land subsidence, which is the ground sinking due to over pumping of groundwater, in North County and wells going dry, particularly in South County where groundwater is the only drinking water supply. That risk increases as the drought persists. Land subsidence can have significant impacts on infrastructure.

Consequently, water conservation is an important strategy to help alleviate these negative impacts.

Water Conservation Programs

Given that half of the water use at an average residence is outdoors, Valley Water doubled its rebate rate for its landscape program to encourage lawn conversions to high-efficiency landscape. Valley Water continues to conduct public outreach to encourage water conservation and participation in Valley Water's conservation programs. Participation in these programs greatly increased in 2021 and continues to be high. As part of Resolution 21-68 adopted on June 9, 2021, Valley Water commits to aggressively promote water conservation programs to all water users.

Countywide Water Use Reduction

Valley Water is engaging with retailers and cities to encourage drought response actions. As of January 31, 2022, the County of Santa Clara and 13 cities in Santa Clara County have taken formal action to their elected boards in response to the drought and to Valley Water's call to reduce water use by 15% compared to 2019 levels. All cities in Santa Clara County have increased conservation messaging in response to the drought.

Santa Clara County has made consistent progress in reducing water use since Valley Water's call to reduce water use in June 2021. Valley Water's retailers used the least amount of water in December 2021 compared to other months following Valley Water's call in June 2021. The cumulative water savings since Valley Water's call was made in June 2021 through December 2021 is 8% for the City of Santa Clara as well as for the total of all retailers. Winter months reflect indoor water use as most homes reduce or shut off irrigation during these months. As indoor water use is less discretionary and more difficult to cut back than outdoor use, we anticipate that consistently maintaining a 15% reduction in water use during winter months will be particularly challenging. Valley Water continues its outreach to the media and community to encourage residents, businesses, farms, and others to save water in order to achieve a cumulative 15% reduction in water use in 2022. In addition, Valley Water continues to work closely with its retailers, including Santa Clara.

The Model Water Efficient New Development Ordinance (MWENDO) would ensure new developments meet strong water efficiency standards. Valley Water works with cities to encourage adoption of MWENDO, including Santa Clara. Valley Water has shared resources and information on water-efficiency measures with City staff.

Drought Planning

Valley Water utilizes an adaptive management approach to address drought by tracking water supply, hydrologic variables, and other changing conditions, and proposing decisions as needed. In spring 2022, Valley Water plans to assess continuation of the drought and its impact to water supply. If needed, Valley Water will pursue additional emergency transfer supplies and increase the countywide call for water use reduction at that time.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are adequate funds in the Adopted FY 2021-22 Budget and Water Utility Enterprise (WUE) reserves to carry out the operations described in this memo. There are adequate funds in the Safe Clean Water Program to carry out the expansion of Landscape Rebate Program in addition to the ongoing Water Utility funded water conservation program efforts. With the rebate amount increase, additional staffing resources are needed to support the expanded conservation program. A budget adjustment from WUE reserves for these additional resource needs may be brought to the Board in FY 2021-22.

CEQA:

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have a potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

Kirsten Struve, 408-630-3138



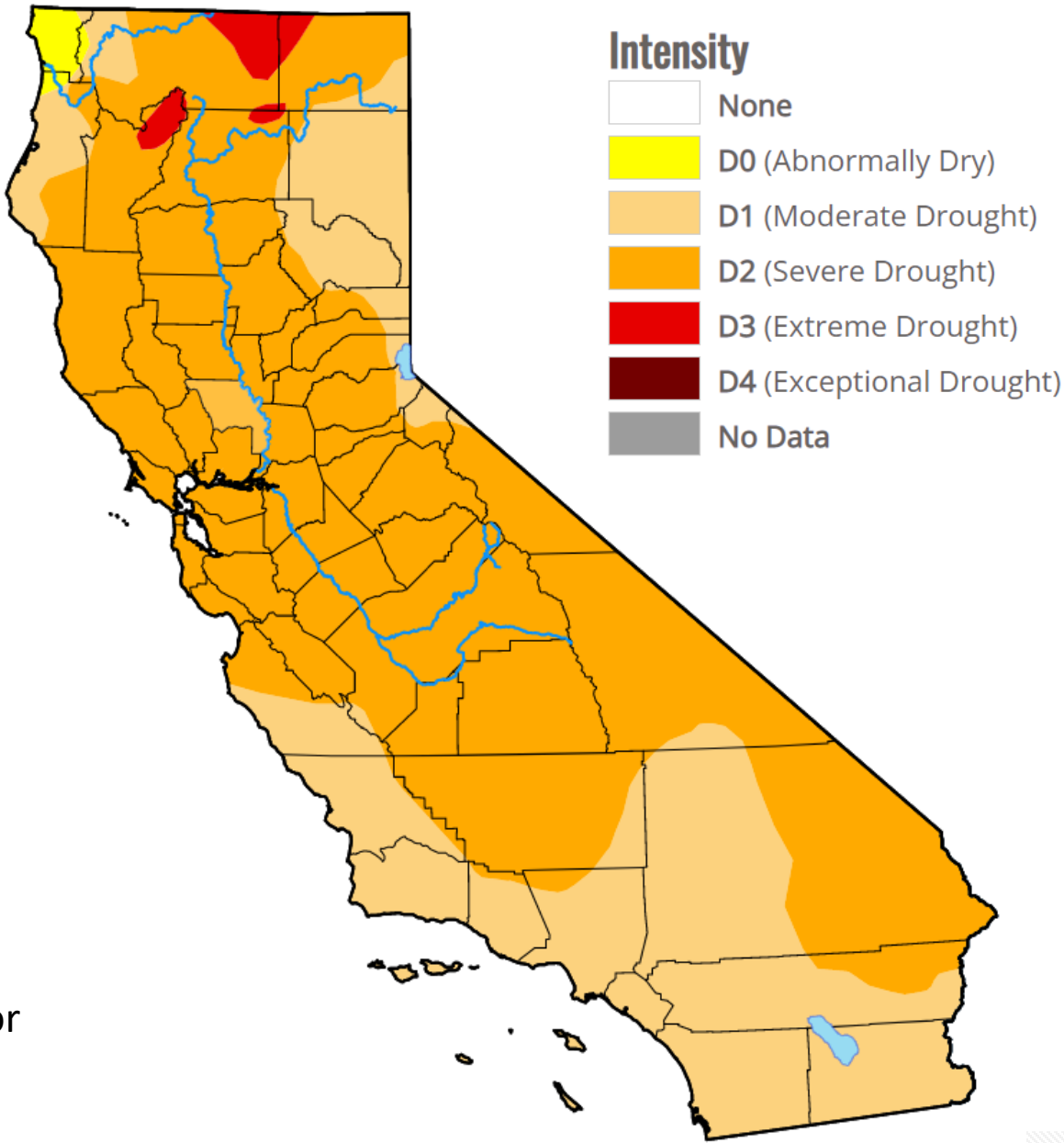
Drought and Water Supply Conditions, Call for Conservation, and Future Planning

Special Joint Meeting with City of Santa Clara

February 15, 2022

Presenter: Neeta Bijoor, Ph.D.

Drought Status

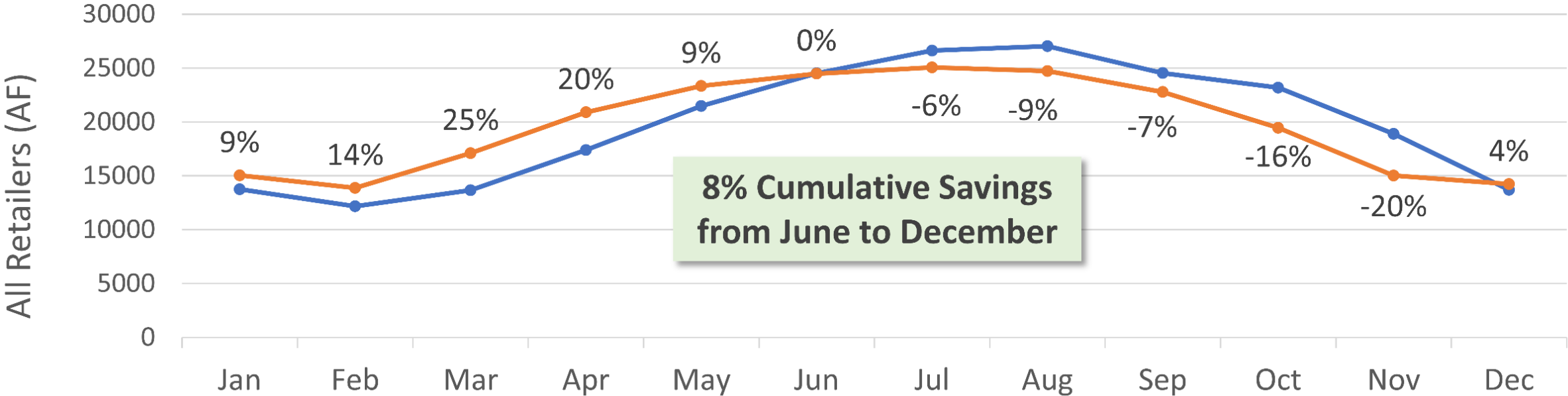


Data sources: U.S. Drought Monitor

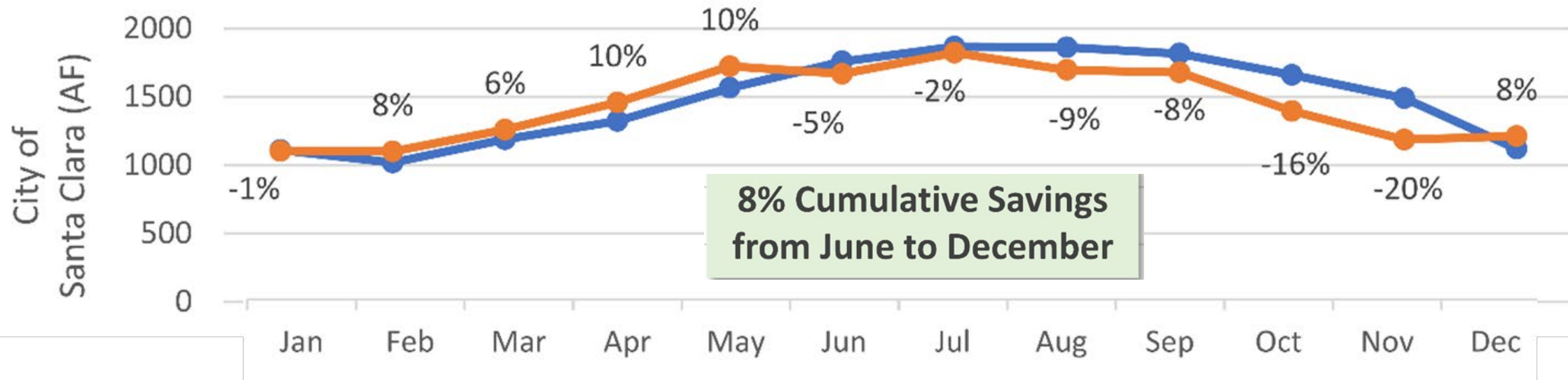
Countywide Water Savings in 2021

2019 2021

The percent increase (+) or percent decrease (-) in water use from 2019 to 2021 is shown for each month.



City of Santa Clara's Water Savings in 2021



Drought and Conservation Public Outreach

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49ers and Sharks PSAs

Movie theater ads

Influencer campaign

Media outreach

Social media messaging

Speakers Bureau presentations

Youth Commission



Expanded Purified Water Campaign

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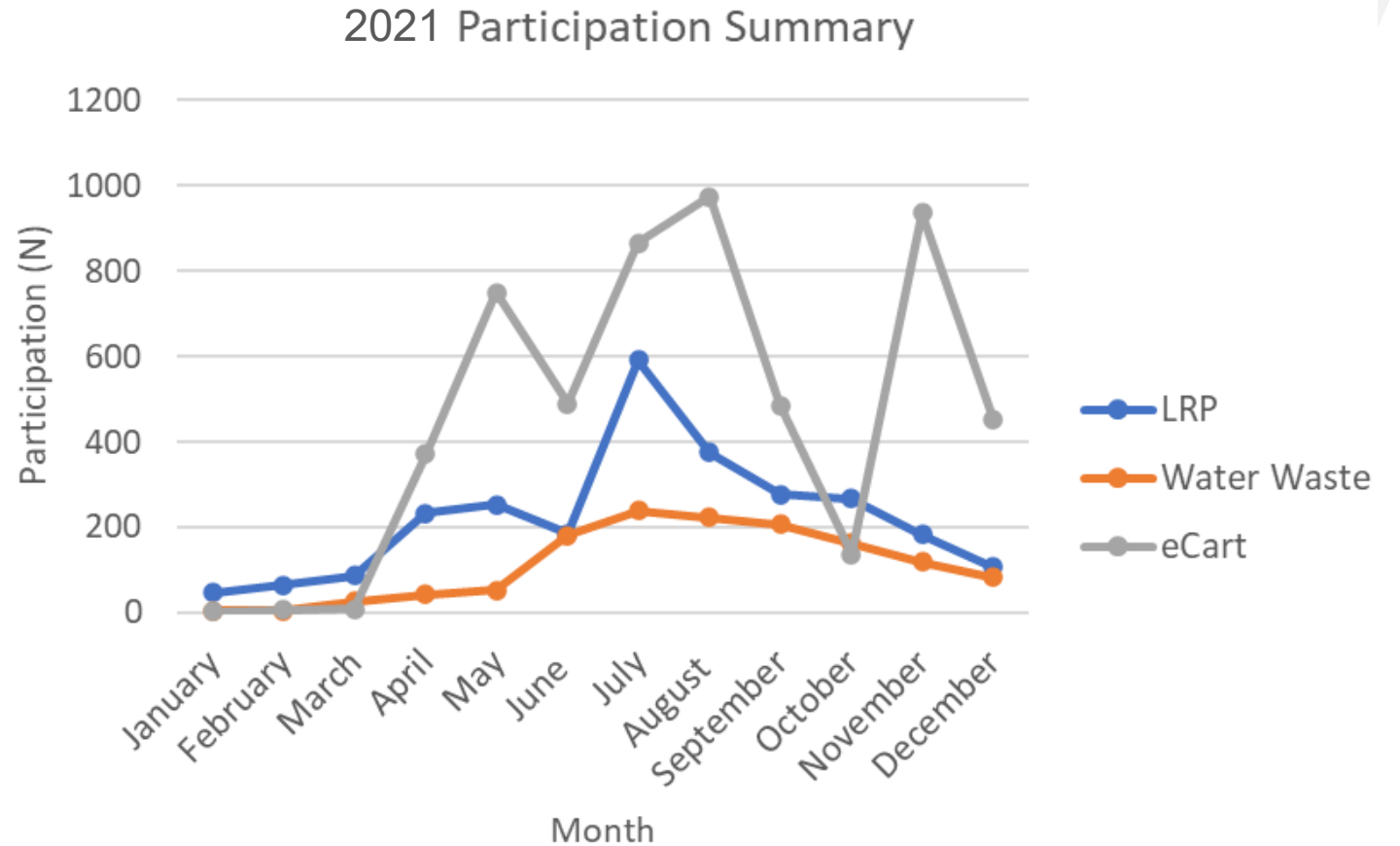


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Water Conservation

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- Participation remains high
- Reduced program processing time
- Vendor assistance



Imported Water Supplies

2021

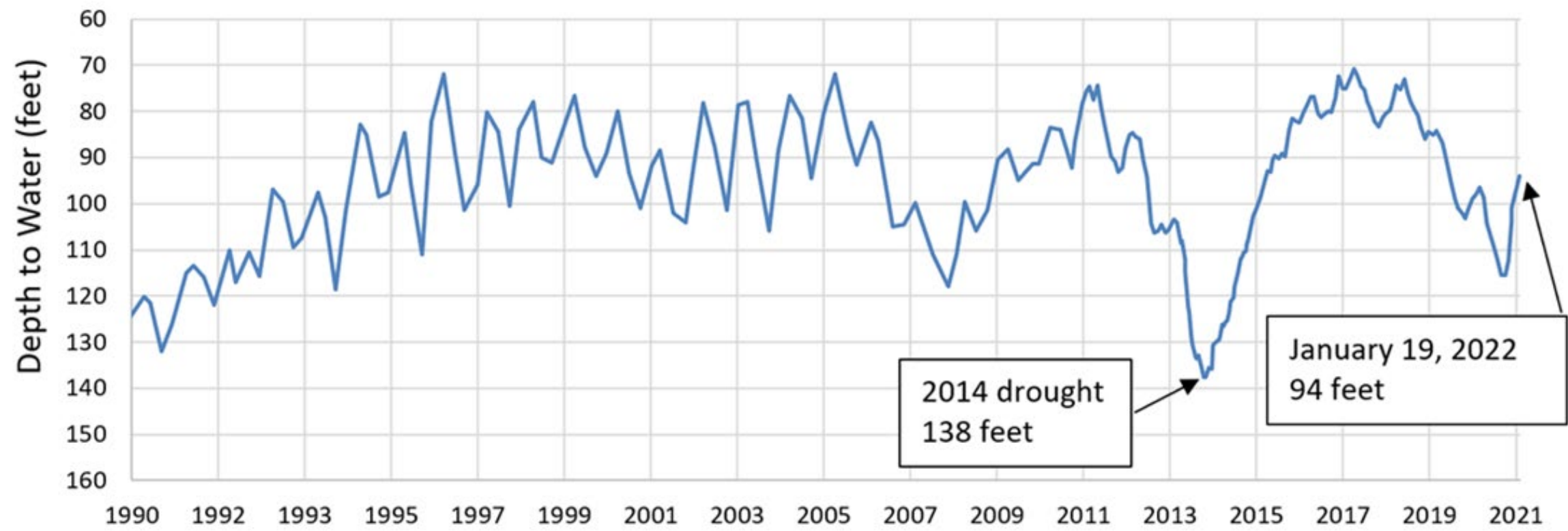
- Success in receiving emergency transfers, banked water

2022

- State Water Project (15%), Central Valley Project (TBD)
- Pursuing emergency transfers, banked water

Groundwater

Santa Clara Plain Index Well

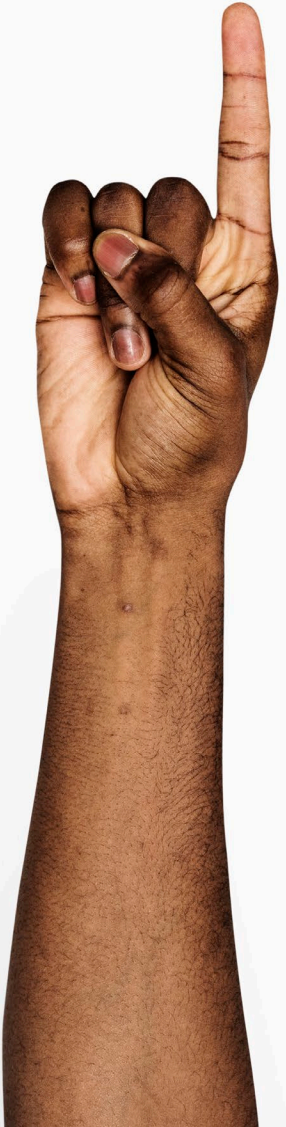


Next Steps

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- Assess scenario we are in by Spring 2022
- If drought continues, emergency imported supplies and increased call for water use reduction
- Monitor water supply indicators and adapt as needed

QUESTIONS



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