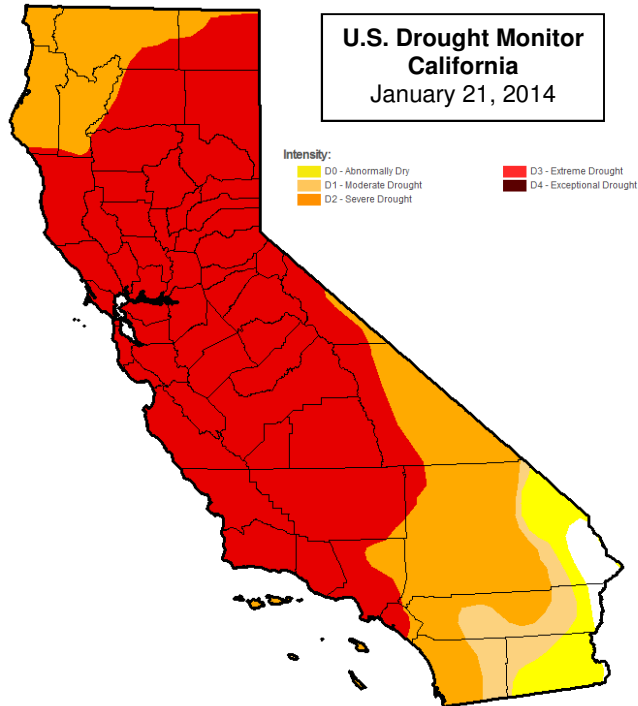


# California Winter Fuels and Fire Assessment

Issued: January 29, 2014



## Weather

- It is unlikely that significant drought relief will occur despite the potential for moderate amounts of precipitation over the northern half of the state during the first few weeks of February.
- Percent of average precipitation expected:  
*February:* 30% of average or less with most of the precipitation in the first 2 weeks of the month.  
*March:* 20% of average.
- Average maximum temperatures are expected to be near normal to above normal through March.
- Winds in February are likely to be more seasonably westerly. The persisting East Pacific high pressure ridge is expected to return in March with a chance of occasional periods with moderate foehn (north to east) wind events of 1-3 days duration. Any foehn winds that develop will have greatest effects in the Sacramento Valley and surrounding foothills, Coast Range and Bay Area southward into southern California.

## Summary

- **Most of California is in a long term drought ranging from Severe to Extreme intensity.** (Drought State of Emergency for CA declared 1/17/2014)
- **Fuels are historically dry.**
- **Fire occurrence is well above normal.**
- **Concerns include Prescribed Burning, Resource Staffing and Increased Fire Occurrence:**
- *Resource Staffing: Need for severity funding, fatigue management, preparations for earlier and long duration fire season, etc.*
- *Much of California will continue to have above normal large fire potential.*
- **North:**
- [http://gacc.nifc.gov/oncc/predictive/fuels\\_fire-danger/psac/erc/index.htm](http://gacc.nifc.gov/oncc/predictive/fuels_fire-danger/psac/erc/index.htm)
- **South:**
- [http://gacc.nifc.gov/oscc/predictive/fuels\\_fire-danger/psa\\_nfdrs/ercindex.html](http://gacc.nifc.gov/oscc/predictive/fuels_fire-danger/psa_nfdrs/ercindex.html)

## Fuels

- Energy Release Component (ERC) values are running far above average with many areas setting new maximum values for this time of year. ERC's are above the 90th percentile in over 50% of the Predictive Service Areas (PSA).
- Dormant live fuels will need a significant increase in soil moisture for normal green-up to occur this spring. The impact of long duration freezing temperatures in early December on vegetation has yet to be evaluated (amount and spatial extent of frost kill).
- 100 and 1,000 hour fuel moistures are at critically low levels due to lack of rainfall and snowpack.
- The amount of live/dead fuels available for combustion is unprecedented for this time of year.