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Los Angeles Times

## Water and Power

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*Your guide to the California drought from the Los Angeles Times.*

### NEWS AND POLICY

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**Transforming seawater:** Politicians and water officials converged in **Carlsbad** on Monday for the ceremonial opening of the largest **desalination plant** in the Western Hemisphere. [The plant, which is owned by Poseidon Water of Boston and cost \\$1 billion to construct, will turn seawater into potable water for San Diego customers.](#) But it comes at a cost — twice the cost of water provided by the Metropolitan Water District. “It’s the only true drought-proof supply available, and it’s a half-penny a gallon,” said Poseidon vice president Scott Maloni.

**Congressional inaction: Drought legislation** is stalled in the U.S. House of Representatives, and Republican members are blaming the holdup on **Sen. Dianne Feinstein**. With the House and Senate members expected to leave town later this week, [it’s unlikely that a bill designed to help drought-stricken California will pass before the end of the year.](#) “I was hopeful that we would get a deal done. Unfortunately, we could not get the senators to accept a good, reasonable compromise. All 14 members of our delegation got to yes. Our two senators could not,” said Rep. Ken Calvert.

**Shelter from the storm:** The city of Los Angeles will allocate \$12.4 million to temporarily house **homeless people** during this winter's El Niño storms. [Mayor Eric Garcetti said it is the first time city officials have dipped into the general fund to pay for homeless aid.](#) Of the city's 26,000 homeless men, women and children, at least 18,000 live without any type of shelter at all. Still, "you have to convince somebody to get off the streets," the mayor said.

## ON THE GROUND

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**Bundle up:** Southern California finally has some **cold and windy weather**, thanks to a cold front that brought rain and snow to the region. Gusts reached 80 mph along the Interstate 5 corridor. On Wednesday morning, [Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties could be at or below freezing.](#)

**Big waves:** The **Ventura Pier** took quite a beating Friday as powerful waves crashed into the 143-year-old structure and forced authorities to close down access to the public. [The waves were the result of a low-pressure storm from the Pacific Northwest.](#)

## OFFBEAT

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**That's nuts:** How can California's **almond** production be up when the nut has gotten a poor reputation for being a water hog? "The boom of almonds that we're seeing today is not due to the most recent plantings — [it's due to the years before, most of them pre-drought.](#)"

**Drastic steps:** The biggest water users in the affluent town of **Rancho Santa Fe** insist [they've taken steps to slash water use during the drought](#) — including buying special equipment from Australia.

## BIG IDEAS

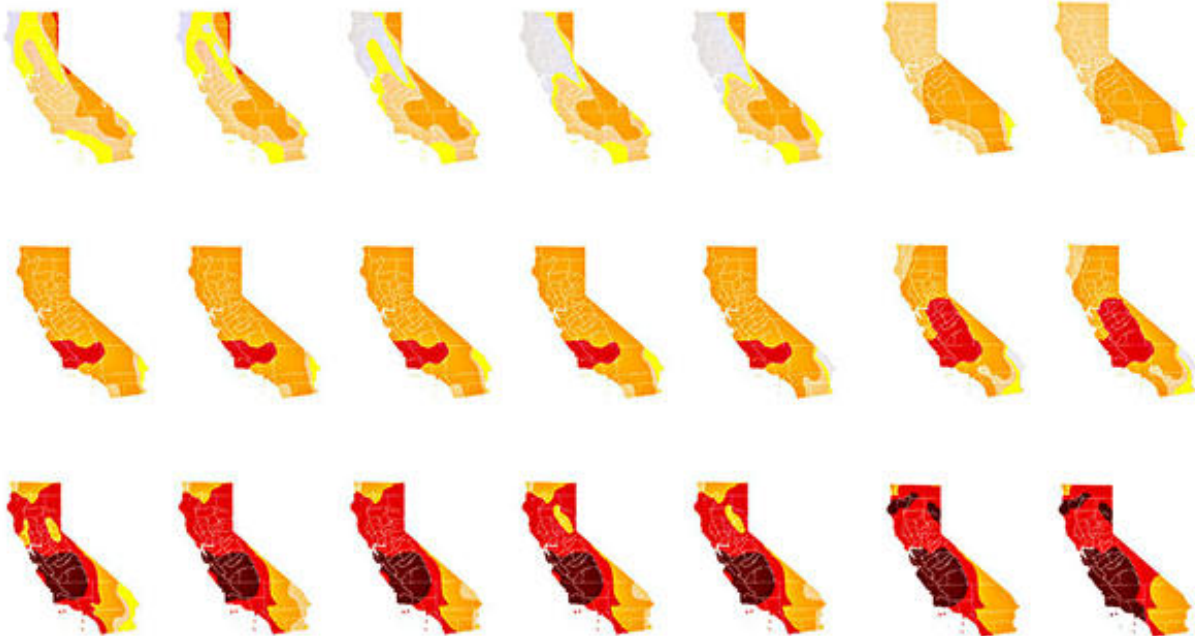
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“These are classic El Niño signals we’re starting to see as we get into our winter, wettest months. Certainly we’re looking at the potential for one of the strongest El Niños in recorded history,”

– [Todd Morris of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration](#)

## DROUGHT SNAPSHOT

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It’s the latest map to show the exceptional drought affecting most of California, courtesy of the U.S. Drought Monitor.

## DAILY TIP

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Are you prepared for the floods that could come with El Niño this winter? The [U.S. Department of Homeland Security](#)’s top tip is to avoid walking or driving through flood waters, even if it is as little as 6 inches of moving water.

## LOOKING AHEAD

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**Tuesday:** The state Water Resources Control Board will meet today in Sacramento.

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