

California eases water restrictions, but drought continues

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Pigeons fly over the Los Angeles River on November 20, 2015 California

California has loosened emergency restrictions on water conservation after El Nino-driven storms boosted reservoir levels this winter in parts of the state, authorities announced.

The State Water Resources Control Board voted unanimously on Wednesday to roll back strict conservation rules and to allow [local](#)

[communities](#) to set their own savings targets based on water supply.

That means that regions that received a lot of rain will see fewer restrictions, while dry regions will still have to abide by strict conservation measures.

"El Nino didn't save us, but this winter gave us some relief," water board chair Felicia Marcus said in a statement. "It's a reprieve though, not a hall pass, for much if not all of California."

Governor Jerry Brown last year ordered a 25 percent cut in water use as the state suffered through the fourth year of an unprecedented drought.

Officials said the emergency measures resulted in 1.3 million acre-feet of [water](#) conserved from June 2015 to March of this year.

A wet winter also helped replenish reservoirs in some parts of the state.

The new rules adopted on Wednesday will go into effect June 1 and will run through January 2017.

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