

VALLEY PUBLIC RADIO

With Drought Assistance Forecast To End Tulare County's Looking For Solutions

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East Porterville in Tulare County was possibly the hardest hit place by the drought.

Earlier this month Governor Jerry Brown declared the California drought over in all but Tulare, Kings, Fresno and Tuolumne counties. Now the state says it won't fund drought assistance programs past June. [Tulare County](#) is still seeing drought impacts and to continue drought assistance there it'll take about \$4 million annually. More than \$19 million has been spent on drought assistance in Tulare County alone.

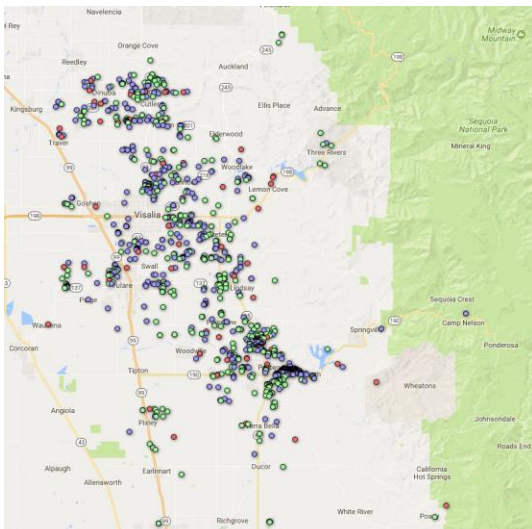
"We do have people that are calling and saying with the additional rain their wells are coming back online. That's wonderful, but for some people that might not happen" - Tammie Weyker

"I don't know when the governor is going to say that Tulare County is in a drought, but for us there are still folks that are going to be impacted because the

groundwater issue is not going to go away soon," says Tammie Weyker with Tulare County.

With the help of state funding Tulare County has aided families with the effects of drought at a cost of about \$500,000 a month since 2014. There are still around 90 homes with dry wells there and more than 450 residences rely on a bottled drinking water program.

In just over two months funding for a water tank program, showers and a non-potable water filling station will come to an end. Weyker says the water tank program would be the hardest to disassemble and the county is in talks with the state about extending the deadline to have tanks removed from homes. The county is also unsure at this point whether the tanks will be sold or stored for possible future emergencies.



As of April 17, 2017 there were 90 dry domestic wells in Tulare County.

"There are still people using the household tank program," Weyker says. "That's one of the pieces we are doing additional planning on and how are we going to create and offer solutions for folks."

Weyker says people there are still having troubles because of how much water was pumped out of the ground during the drought.

"We do have people that are calling and saying with the additional rain their wells are coming back online," say Weyker. "That's wonderful, but for some people that might not happen so they might just need to look into what can I do."

Weyker says the county is working with the California Office of Emergency Services and local groups like Self Help Enterprises to figure out short and long-term solutions for people with water issues. Although, she says the problem won't totally go away in Tulare County until the region's issues with groundwater are resolved. The county is also working with the state to determine whether the county can

receive an extension to have time to phase out existing drought assistance.