

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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### **CAL FIRE Stresses Preparedness Due to Lack of Rain** Fire Activity up Over 45 Percent

**Sacramento** – An early increase in fire activity has CAL FIRE looking at the lack of rainfall as an indicator of a potentially higher fire threat this summer. Since the beginning of the year, CAL FIRE has responded to over 680 wildfires, which is more than 200 over the average for this time of year.

“Our firefighters have responded to an increased number of wildfires due to the very little rainfall we have received over the past few months,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE director. “Last week in Southern California we increased our staffing and moved our airtankers to their bases, which was needed as we saw several large wildfires over the weekend.”

In late March, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) conducted this year’s next-to-last snow survey and the low levels have CAL FIRE concerned about the impact to this year’s fire season. This final survey found that snowpack is just 52 percent of average statewide, according to the Department of Water Resources. Due to the low rainfall levels across the state from January to April, this year is likely to go down as one of the driest ever.

The lack of winter rains has resulted in dry conditions across the state leading to a number of unseasonably large wildfires that have already threatened people, homes and the state’s watershed. Over the past few months CAL FIRE crews responded to an increased number of large wildfires including the 296 acre Becks Fire in Lake County, the River Fire in Inyo County which grew to 406 acres and most recently, the 311 acre Jurupa Fire in Riverside County.

“In many other areas of the state we are in the process of training our seasonal firefighters and monitoring weather conditions closely to determine our staffing levels,” said Chief Pimlott. “While we are busy transitioning into fire season, this is the time we want residents to begin preparing their homes for fire season by creating 100 feet of Defensible Space.”

CAL FIRE is asking Californians to prepare for wildfires by taking these actions:

- Maintain 100 feet of Defensible Space
- Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds from within 30 feet of your home
- Trim trees 6 feet from the ground
- Remove all leaves, pine needles and debris from roofs
- Create an Evacuation Plan in case of a wildfire

For more tips on preparing for a wildfire visit: [www.ReadyForWildfire.org](http://www.ReadyForWildfire.org) or [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).

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